

SLAVIC FOLKLORE

A Symposium

Edited by
ALBERT BATES LORD

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1956

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A SYMPOSIUM

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with a Preface

by

ALBERT BATES LORD

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

PHILADELPHIA

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His [Bojan's] wizard's fingers he set upon the live strings, and they sang in plangent praise of the princes: Jaroslav of old, and Mstislav the Brave—who knifed Rededja to death in front of the Cherkes army—and Roman the Fair, the son of Svjatoslav.

THE DISCOURSE OF IGOR'S CAMPAIGN
(Trans. Vladimir Nabokov)

PREFACE

THIS volume is evidence of the growing importance of Slavic studies in the United States. It is an indication of what this country can accomplish, and is accomplishing, in presenting the investigations of scholars in the field of Slavic folklore. Although the majority of contributors to this book are of Slavic descent, with but one exception they are all now residents of the United States. Our resources in this vast and significant segment of universal knowledge are great and are rapidly increasing. We are only beginning to feel our strength.

It is, nevertheless, a source of real regret that more contributions from abroad are not included here. Although the work of men and women elsewhere, published in a variety of languages, is known to specialists who are competent in those languages, it deserves a wider public. One of the real services that we can perform is to make that work available in English.

Studies in folktale, epic, lyric songs, rituals, customs and beliefs, and the dance as given here are witness to the diversity of material at hand for investigation. Jakobson, Vernadsky, and Čiževsky in the series of articles with which the book opens have turned to Russian epic: one presents us with hitherto unpublished *byliny*; the second brings to print for the first time an Ossetian heroic poem related to the song of Mstislav mentioned in the famous *Tale of Igor'*; and the third, by a very happy coincidence, searches out epic material about Yaroslav the Wise, also referred to in the *Tale*. The epic note is struck again at the end of the volume with a tribute to a great South Slavic epic singer, Avdo Međedović, who died last year. Thus the two still surviving traditions of Slavic oral epic, Russian and South Slavic, frame the other categories of folklore.

Folktale is represented by Stenbock-Fermor's paper on the stories about the Russian highwayman, Van'ka Kain, which emerge from oral into written tradition. And Gibian's article on folklore elements in Dostoevskij demonstrates how rewarding in understanding of the great masters of literature such research can be. Pirkova-Jakobson and Ryan write on Czechoslovak rituals and customs as they have undergone change in the process of being imported to the United States; they illustrate clearly the value of studies in acculturation. Rusić, our sole European contributor, delves into the belief among the South Slavs in the language of birds, animals, and mute things, the knowledge of which brings special advantages to those human beings who may possess it.

No book on folklore would be complete without articles on lyric songs and on the dance. Kremenliev surveys various types of songs in Bulgarian tradition, with musical examples. And Kurath, whose work on American Indian dances is well known, shows her versatility in her challenging paper on Central European (Polish, Czechoslovak, and Yugoslav) dances and their possible relationship to Central and South American dance. With Slavic folklore we have thus nearly encircled the globe!

I should like here to express my deepest gratitude to the scholars who have contributed articles to this volume, including those whose papers (on Polish and Ukrainian folklore) did not arrive in time for printing in this book. To the Committee for the Promotion of Advanced Slavic Cultural Studies and to its Chairman, R. Gordon Wasson, we are indebted for the financial support which has made this special number possible. Thomas A. Sebeok and his efficient assistant, Ann Mitchner, have been of invaluable help in all ways, especially in difficult matters of editing, and perhaps even more in their readiness to stretch deadlines almost to the breaking point.

ALBERT BATES LORD

SLAVIC FOLKLORE

A SYMPOSIUM

YAROSLAV THE WISE IN EAST-SLAVIC EPIC POETRY¹

By DMITRI ČIŽEVSKY

AT present East-Slavic folklore is represented by the Great-Russian *byliny* and the Ukrainian *dumy*. The *dumy* arose not earlier than the sixteenth century, while the *byliny* in their origins go back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. To be more exact, their themes and separate motifs belong to that period, and not the outward form and the language. The investigation of the *byliny* by the "historical school" revealed a number of themes and motifs that arose in the tenth and eleventh centuries. At present, the *byliny* form a cycle around the Kievan prince "Vladimir the Fair Sun," who plays a passive role in almost all of them. The name of Prince Vladimir conceals various princes of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries. In some cases it is Prince Vladimir the Saint (or "the Great," as he usually is called in Ukrainian historiography). But the founder of the historical school, Vsevolod Miller, succeeded in proving that at least six (and perhaps seven) themes are connected with another Vladimir: Vladimir Monomakh, who reigned in Kiev from 1113 to 1125, but who played an important political role as early as the 80's and 90's of the eleventh century.²

It seems curious that the third significant prince of that century, Yaroslav the Wise (who reigned with a brief interruption from 1015 to 1054), is not encountered in epic poetry. We shall see, however, that this is not completely true.

In searching for traces of the past in East-Slavic folklore, besides the *byliny* one must consider historical songs and religious songs as well. Formally, both types differ but little from the *byliny* and are frequently performed by the same singers (*skaziteli*). "Historical songs," however, in which certain historical events and names stand out distinctly, may be dated only from the fifteenth century. The religious songs were in considerable part thoroughly re-worked in the seventeenth century, which is shown by the influence of syllabic versification in many of them, by the reflection of sectarian (Old-Believer) ideology in some, and by a few other symptoms. Otherwise, the appearance of several religious songs may be assigned to a very early period. One such song shall be the subject of our discussion later on.³

As a preliminary, some methodological principles should be given to serve as guides in establishing the historical bases of folkloristic works of the epic type.

The oldest *byliny* undoubtedly arose in the two most important centers of Eastern Europe of that time: in Kiev or in Novgorod. Later they spread over the whole territory of Eastern Europe, and even drifted to the Asiatic frontiers of East-Slavic colonization. In the Ukraine and in White-Russia, however, where their existence—or, to a lesser degree, the remembrance of them—was still maintained in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even eighteenth centuries, they disappeared almost without a trace; feeble impressions remained only in the form of scattered names and fairy tale themes.⁴ Moreover, the epic shifted into a social environment that was completely different

from that of its origin. If its source must be sought in urban centers, especially at princely courts, then later on it gradually descended to the "lowest" strata of the population, and ultimately became the property of folk-singers, the *skaziteli*, who even in their own society belonged mainly to the lowest layer. This, of course, changed the character of the epic. Furthermore, the reflections of political events of later centuries were gradually superimposed upon the old theme. Of the original base only a few names and the thematic scheme were preserved. To detect these few elements of the past is a difficult task, and the results of investigation are often uncertain and controversial.⁵

The events represented in epic poetry are predominantly military exploits. But events of spiritual history are also reflected; usually they are expressed through symbolical images as military deeds. The Christianization of Russia, or the creation of the state organization, found its expression precisely through such symbolical images. Thus the legendary "summoning of the Varangians" is the symbolical image of the peaceful establishment of state power and replaces a description of military conquest or of a prolonged process of consolidating petty communities into a state union. There can also be no doubt that the *bylina* about Dobrynia's struggle with the dragon is the symbolical representation of Christianization. Dobrynia is a historical personage, known to us as a participant in the "baptizing" of Novgorod, while the dragon is a traditional symbol of paganism; Dobrynia defeats the dragon with the "hat of the Greek land" (Christianity came to Russia from Greece), not with the customary weapons of dragon-fighters, sword, or spear. Moreover, other themes, symbolizing Christianization, are connected with Dobrynia's name: he "fetches water" for Prince Vladimir, and he also bathes in the Puchaina river (the baptism of the Kievans, customarily designated as the "baptism of Russia," took place in the Kievan river Pochaina). Furthermore, Dobrynia is a hero of the *byliny* that go back to Indo-European themes (the *byliny* about Prince Vladimir's marriage, which contain remarkable parallels, for instance, to the lays of the Nibelungs).⁶

The example of epic tradition around Dobrynia, which included, as we see, divers elements, leads us to the vital question about the authors of those epic works which serve as the base of contemporary *byliny*. Judging from analogies among Indo-European and other peoples, we might say that the authors were either courtly singer-poets or the socially lower rhapsodists, in old Russia the *скоморохи* or the *шнйлеве*. The religious themes of some of the *byliny* (about Dobrynia, and others) compel us, however, to look for authors also among the vocational men-of-letters of old Russia—the clergy. That the attitude of the clergy towards epic poetry was not negative is already shown by the fact that the clergymen who were the authors of the annals of the eleventh century utilized epic works in their narratives, which include numerous secular and military scenes;⁷ the same is also made evident by the images and metaphors borrowed from military life in the works of ecclesiastical authors of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries.⁸ Such an expert as Joseph Bédier noted the part played by the clergy in the development of old French epic poetry. As to East-Slavic epic poetry, numerous and convincing remarks have been made by the author of brilliant essays on the subject, M. Hrushevsky.⁹ As we shall see, it is precisely to ecclesiastical circles that we can assign an epic work concerned with Yaroslav the Wise and preserved until our own times in a re-worked form.

In the old literature we find evidences of the existence of epic works about Yaroslav the Wise. They are, first of all, the epic songs of Boyan, who was a contemporary of Yaroslav and is mentioned in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign." "Old Yaroslav" is spoken of there together with his brother and rival, Mstislav. It is about them that Boyan "sang a song."¹⁰

The Annals, dedicated to Yaroslav, contribute other instances. The first edition of the Annals arose most probably in the time of Yaroslav, around 1037. In them one finds under that year information concerning Yaroslav's church and secular buildings, the founding of monasteries by him, the spreading of Christianity, the organization of translating and of copying books, and, following a short sermon on the benefit of "book learning," praise of Yaroslav; this is an apparent conclusion of the first edition of the Annals, written probably on the occasion of the founding of the metropolis and of the cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev.¹¹ This ending is, of course, the work of an ecclesiastical writer. But for the years of Yaroslav's reign, 1015-1054, the Annals contain a number of fragments in which the epic character of narration stands out with maximum clarity. Such is the description of Yaroslav's struggle with Sviatopolk, and with Bolesław the Brave, the Polish king (1015-1019), and also the depiction of Yaroslav's struggle for supremacy with Mstislav of Tmutorokan' (1024); the picture of Yaroslav's battle with the Pecheneqs (1036), and in part the information about the unsuccessful campaign of Yaroslav's son, Vladimir, against Constantinople (1043). On the same pages we read fragments of an epic character dealing with Mstislav's single combat against the Caucasian giant Rededia (1022; this episode is mentioned in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign" as a theme of Boyan's "songs"); here (1044), too, is recorded the legendary story about the birth of Prince Vseslav of Polotsk, also the hero of an old epic, excerpts from which are re-told or simply cited in "The Tale."¹²

The stories about Yaroslav noted in the Annals breathe the spirit of old epic poetry. Here are, first of all, episodes bearing the character of sagas: Yaroslav, who reigned until 1015 in Novgorod, slays the hostile Novgorodians, having deceived them by indicating his peaceful intentions (1015); Princess Olga dealt in exactly the same manner with the Drevliani, according to the saga recorded in the Annals under the year 945. Yaroslav's struggle with Sviatopolk is depicted by means of a number of epic motifs: both sides provoke each other into fighting by means of jeering (1016 and 1018); the mockers emerge as losers both times. The narrative includes riddle-speeches which are typical of Scandinavian sagas. The battles take place under uniquely heroic circumstances: in 1016 the battle proceeds on a frozen lake at night; in 1019 the battle begins at dawn, continues through the whole day, the antagonists clash thrice (an epic number), blood fills the valleys. Then follows the description of the mad flight of the defeated Sviatopolk and his death, which is obscured in legend. Even more characteristic is the story about the battle with Mstislav's forces at Listven: the battle occurs at night during a thunderstorm, the weapons of the warriors gleam in the flashes of lightning (both thunder and lightning may be only poetic metaphors), Yaroslav's ally is mentioned—"Yakun the Handsome" (the Varangian Hakon)—and even the brocaded cloak which he lost on the battlefield. The narrative ends with an apothegm by the victorious Mstislav (1024). Less characteristic is the depiction of the battle with the Pecheneqs in 1036. Traits of epic style are also evident in the account of Vladimir Yaroslavich's campaign against Constantinople (1043). Characteristics

of an epic legend are shown as well by the story of how the Novgorodians prevented the defeated Yaroslav from fleeing "beyond the sea" by destroying his fleet (1018),¹³ and by the tale about the slaying of the Poles at the command of their ally, the "mad" Sviatopolk (1018). The character and style of these episodes, including the accounts of Mstislav's single combat and Vseslav's birth, stand out distinctly in contrast to the stories and discussions of Christian-moral content and ecclesiastical style recorded on the same pages: the moralistic introduction to the whole account of Yaroslav under the year 1015; the supplement to the account under 1015; the discussion of sin by the fratricide Sviatopolk under 1019, of the sorcerers in Suzdal under 1024; the account under 1037 of Yaroslav's cultural activities, and that of the founding of the Kiev-Pecherski monastery under 1051; and finally, real or fictitious, the will of Yaroslav, recorded by the chronicler under 1054.¹⁴

The epic fragments from the chronicle narrative distinguish themselves by the same traits that characterize the sagas which are included in the narrative of events of the tenth century.¹⁵ I shall mention the most important.

First there are the great number of epic formulas which became traditional in the "military tales" of old Russia and survived until the seventeenth century in the tales of Azov.¹⁶ Such are the formulas: "уже мнѣ сихъ не крѣсити" (the same formula is in the Annals, under 945 and 1152, and in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign"); the prince "wipes away sweat" after the campaign (1019), he "wipes away tears" when he remembers those who perished (1016); the warriors are "numberless" (1016, 1036); the prince with his army "приде в силѣ тяжцѣ"; the warriors threaten the cowards with death ("аще кто не поидеть с нами, потнемъ его"); the leaders deliver speeches on the battlefield—Boleslaw the Brave addresses his army: аще вы сего укора (taunt) не жалѣ, азъ единѣ погыну (having confronted the enemy alone); speeches are delivered by Yaroslav (1015, 1019), and Mstislav (1024); the battles are characterized by the formulas "the fray was cruel" (1016, 1019), "mighty" (1024), "terrible" (1024), "such as has not yet been in Rus'" (1024). The commander of the campaign of 1043, Vyshata, expresses a variant of the wish—either to win or to perish.

Characteristic, in general, is the great number of "historical pronouncements" by the protagonists. They include the riddle-speeches: Yaroslav's words, уже мнѣ сихъ не крѣсити, most probably meant a declaration of bloody revenge ("revenge" is also the subject of texts showing ecclesiastical style—1016, 1019—ascribing "revenge" to God: an obvious polemic against the ideology of the authors of epic tales); Yaroslav's words were not understood by the Novgorodians (1016);¹⁷ Yaroslav's riddle-question to his Kievan friend, "What action do you advise: little mead has been prepared, while the *druzhina* is large?" and the answer—also a riddle: "It is necessary to give to drink (mead) in the evening." "And Yaroslav understood that he advised them to fight in the night" (Novgorodian Annals I, 1016). The expression "to give mead" (to drink) reminds us of the epic device of Scandinavian sagas: bi-articulate metaphorical formulas to designate ordinary objects, the so-called *Kenningar* 'to give to drink mead' (or some other intoxicating beverage), apparently were used instead of the Slavic word "to battle" (similarly in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign" and in "The Story of the Destruction of Riazan'"; the formula was also preserved in the contemporary *byliny* and in Ukrainian historical songs).¹⁸

Definite marks of epic style are the frequent alliterations in the epic passages of the Annals, mostly in short sentences.¹⁹ Here we frequently encounter words which are unusual and rare, and inserted, apparently, just to achieve an alliteration. To give examples:

1015: Sviatoslav, having acquired the Kievan throne:

нача даяти овѣмъ корзна, а другимъ
кунами

Д-К-Д-К

1016: The Kievans mock the Novgorodians:

что придосте с хромьцемъ симъ,
а вы плотници суще,
а приставимъ васъ хоромовъ рубити

С-Х-С

В-П-С

П-В-Х

1018: Yaroslav's commander mocks Bolesław:

то ти прободемъ трѣскою черево
твое толъстое

Т-Т-Т-Т-Т

Yaroslav:

приведоша Варягы, и вдаша имъ скотъ,
и совокупи . . . воя многи

В-В-С

С-В

1019: In battle descriptions:

пойдоша противу собѣ и покрыша поле

П-П-П-П

1019: During Sviatopolk's flight:

и бѣжащю ему, нападе на нь бѣсъ . . .
гонимъ Божьимъ гнѣвомъ, прибѣжа в пустыню

Б-Н-Н-Б

Г-Г-П-П

1019: While Yaroslav:

утерь пота . . . , показавъ побѣду

П-П-П

1024: In the conflict with Mstislav, Yaroslav:

посла за море по Варягы,
и приде Якунъ с Варягы,
и бѣ Якунъ съ лѣпъ,
и луда бѣ у него золотомъ истъкана

П-П-В

П-Я-В

Б-Я-Л

Л-Б

1036:

Печенѣзи приступати почаша,
и сступишася на мѣстѣ,
идеже стоитъ нынѣ святая Софья

П-П-П

С-Н

С-Н-С-С

1043:

бысть буря велика,
и разби корабли Руси,
и княжь корабль разби вѣтръ
и взя князя в корабль . . .
. . . воевода Ярославль

Б-Б-В

Р-К-Р

К-К-Р-В

В-К-В-К

Also in the tale preserved in Novgorodian Annals about the events of 1016, Yaroslav sends a question to his friend in Kiev:

Уто ты тому велиши творити:
меду мало варено,
а дружины много?

Т-Т-В-Т

М-М-В

Д-М

Yaroslav receives the reply:

Даче меду мало,
а дружины много,
да къ вечеру въдати

Д-М-М

Д-М

Д-В-В

These are only examples, but such traits give sufficient indication that the accounts of Yaroslav's military exploits are remnants of epic traditions, possibly even of the "songs" of "Boyan the Seer."²⁰

One *bylina* may be assigned with considerable probability to Yaroslav's period, although he is not the main protagonist and therefore could have easily merged with the epic Vladimir. This is the *bylina* of Solovei Budimirovich, some variants of which belong, in their present form, to the works of this genre most perfect stylistically.

The content is simple, and the stylistic ornaments are especially attractive. Along the Dniepr, from beyond the sea, a merchant and singer, Solovei Budimirovich, comes to Kiev in three (or thirty, or thirty-three) ships. In one night, he builds a magnificent palace in Kiev. In the morning the palace is noticed by Prince Vladimir's niece, Zabava Putiatishna (the customary unmarried feminine protagonist in the *byliny*). She goes to the palace, where she is received by Solovei. The further development of the action changes in different variants: in some Solovei shames the maiden, who comes to him alone and even offers him her hand; in others, he marries Zabava after a long absence (e.g., a trip to obtain his mother's blessing); in some cases he returns at the moment when Zabava is being married to somebody else.²¹

A. I. Liashchenko pointed out the possible historical basis of this *bylina*. Some scholars accept his interpretation, while others consider this *bylina* as a symbolical representation of courtship, pointing out the coincidence of the content with symbolical wedding songs.²² The coincidences are not numerous: the bridegroom comes from a foreign land and is a merchant; there are a few more coincidences in expression.

Liashchenko interprets the theme of the *bylina* as the reflection of the historical marriage of the Norwegian Viking—later King—Harold the Bold, to Yaroslav's daughter, Elizabeth. In the epic lay this subject is supplemented by fairy tale motifs: the palace, built in one night; the return of the bridegroom at the moment when his bride is being married to somebody else. To establish the origin of the *bylina*, the following traits are important: Solovei comes across the "Virianian Sea" (compare the ancient name of Estonia—Wiriland), from the town of "Ledenets" (ancient designation of Revel-Tallin—Lyndanissa); the "Kodolian Island" is mentioned (perhaps the Island of Kotlin—Kettingen?). In the Kiev of the eleventh century it was well understood, of course, that these geographical designations were the names of localities en route from Scandinavia to Rus'.²³ Solovei's departure before his wedding is a reflection of the actual history of Harold's marriage, to whom Elizabeth's hand was refused at first, and who was able to marry her only on returning to Kiev after a number of military exploits and adventures. Harold, like Solovei, is a "singer," a poet. A long poem about his unsuccessful courtship is attributed to Harold.²⁴ The voyages of the Varangians served not only military purposes but those of trade as well, and consequently Harold could have been called a "merchant." Finally, the description of Solovei's ship reminds us of Varangian ships. I shall not tarry on the details of Liashchenko's argument. The essential argument in favor of his interpretation is the existence of a European tradition of tales about Harold's courtship and about the song attributed to him. This tradition survived in the West until the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. It is improbable that the Eastern Slavs were the only people who did not utilize, but forgot, an epic motif connected with Kiev and diffused over all Europe.

Anyhow, even if one admits the persuasiveness of Liashchenko's interpretation, the Yaroslav of the *bylina* in its original form could not have played the central role, and easily merged with "Vladimir the Fair Sun." Meanwhile, Solovei-Harold lost the characteristics of a hero; his military exploits are not mentioned in the *bylina*. Nevertheless, even in the sixteenth century, Solovei was regarded as a hero in White-Russia and in the Ukraine comparable to the chief hero of ancient epic poetry, Ilia Muromets. One of the politicians of the Russo-Lithuanian state, speaking in a letter of his political difficulties, thinks that to overcome them one would need "such heroes as Ilia Muromets and Solovei Budimirovich"! ²⁵

It appears, however, that Yaroslav was the subject of an epic work which stylistically approaches the *byliny* but in content belongs to religious songs. This is the "Song of Yegori (George) the Brave." Two religious songs about George are extant. One of them is based on the apocryphal life of the Saint and treats his famous victory against the dragon. However, we are more interested in the second, which appears mysterious in its content. In his time (1879), A. Kirpichnikov was unable to find any bases for it in literary tradition, nor have any been found subsequently. ²⁶

The content of the song, recorded many times among Great-Russians, White-Russians, and Ukrainians, has been broken into separate motifs, as given below, for convenience in treating it:

First Part. 1. In the time of Tsar Theodore (only occasionally called George's father), mother Sophia bears (sometimes "upon Rus' ") three daughters and a son, George. George is described as possessing miraculous attributes: up to his knees his legs are covered with gold, up to his elbows his arms are covered with silver, his head is overlaid with pearls, over his whole body—stars, etc. ²⁷ 2. Then appears a hostile tsar (various names are given, most often Demianishche), who captures George and his sisters and demands that George renounce his Christian faith. He subjects him to tortures, traditional in the biographical literature of saints, partially apocryphal: George is chopped with axes, sawed with saws, immersed under water, boiled in tar, burned with fire, iron shoes with nails are put on his feet (from this list of tortures only an epic number of three is usually chosen). But nothing is able to harm George. Then he is confined in a dungeon and covered with sand.

This part could be called simply "The Song of St. George's Martyrdom." But the most important events are yet to come:

Second Part. 3. After thirty-three years have passed, a storm begins (the winds frequently come "from Rus'," "from Kiev," "from Chernigov"!). George comes out of the dungeon "upon Rus'." Amidst the ruins he finds a "cathedral church" and meets his mother. ²⁸ 4. George sets out on his wanderings over Rus' (sometimes he takes the Gospels with him), and everywhere "affirms the Holy Faith." Along the way he encounters (typical for the *byliny*) заставы, impediments. They are always the same: colliding mountains (similar to the ancient Symplegades—Συμπληγάδες or Πλαγκταί), dense forests blocking the route, occasionally rivers and a sea, and finally herds of beasts (wolves, usually), and of serpents. ²⁹ George pushes away mountains and forests (promising to establish churches on the mountains and to build them from the wood of the forests), parts the rivers, disperses the beasts (commanding them to move on this earth singly or in small groups and to eat only what God "has ordered"), and slays the serpents. ³⁰ Sometimes at this point we encounter a giant bird, holding a fish in its beak (see below); and George drives this bird away to the ocean, where she is supposed to procure her food. 5. In almost all variants

the herd of beasts or of serpents is pastured by three maidens who have lost their human appearance (their skin is like tree bark, their hair like steppe grass or like reeds). They are George's sisters. He sends them to the River Jordan to wash themselves clean, to take off their alien dress, and to wash away their alien faith (Moslem, sometimes "Latin").³¹ 6. Then George slays the "untrue" tsar (Demianishche) and returns to his mother with the sisters.

Third Part. Conclusion: a brief glorification of the Saint.

First of all, it must be noted that both halves of the song can be found separately³² and that in the North a variant has been recorded in which the parts occur in reverse order: first George's wanderings over Rus', and then his "martyrdom."³³ This shows that both parts were probably separate works, which later merged into a whole. The first part (in our outline) corresponds, to some extent, to the traditional "Martyrdom of St. George": the names of father and mother have been changed, and George's birth has been transferred to Russia; the name of a "Russian" town has been added (frequently Jerusalem, inseparable from Russia in the tradition of religious songs). There are, however, *no* bases for the second part of the song among literary monuments. A. Rystenko's attempt to relate the song of George's "wanderings" to various other works is done with a tremendous expenditure of energy and space, but it gives connections which are so risky and unconvincing that they appear completely fantastic. And his conclusion—that all elements of the song may be derived from the apocryphal legend of St. George—is sheer verbosity.³⁴

The champions of the mythological school were easily able, of course, to take George the Brave of the religious song for some divinity. His appearance from a subterranean dungeon gave them a sufficient reason for declaring him a "solar divinity," the "suffering sun," and, because of his activity in the "ordering of Rus'," for designating him as the "radiant" divinity of creation or a demiurge.³⁵ More sober were the voices of Kirpichnikov,³⁶ and, very early (1876), I. Porfiriev.³⁷ The latter noted correctly that the George of the song is a "type of the spiritual hero," the poetical reflection of actual living figures of old Rus'. But the representatives of the mythological interpretation likewise noted correctly that in the image of George we have a "transition" from simple fancy to the representation "of man's struggle against physical obstacles" (F. Buslayev);³⁸ that George is "the moral force, which has emerged from the wild forces of nature" (Tikhonravov).³⁹ There is no reason for denying such interpretations of the meaning of the song: one could cite parallels from the development of Greek myths.

But is George simply a generalized image of the "spiritual hero," or does he reflect some concrete historical personality? P. Bessonov in *Religious Songs* (1861), pointed to George Vsevolodovich, "famous for his struggle with Batu" (Prince of Suzdalian Vladimir, 1218-38), while Shchapov indicated (1863) Yuri Dolgoruki (Suzdalian and Kievan Prince, 1125-57). But Yuri Vsevolodovich's struggle with Batu—which was, moreover, unsuccessful—could explain only St. George's struggle with Demianishche, while Yuri Dolgoruki, undoubtedly an able administrator and organizer (he built the church of St. George in Vladimir, among other accomplishments), played a much more important role in princely dissensions. If either man had been treated in epic works that now are lost, then the main theme would have been, of course, his military exploits.⁴⁰

It appears that the first one to connect Yegori the Brave with the most important Prince George—Yaroslav the Wise—was B. M. Sokolov.⁴¹ This connection, actually, is better supported than any other. First of all, St. George's "journey" is represented in the song as the Christianization ("affirming of the Holy Faith") and the ordering of the "Russian land." Yaroslav is also known (from the Annals and from Metropolitan Ilarion's "Word") as the builder of churches (among them St. Sophia), as the founder of the Kievan Metropolis and of the St. George and St. Irina monasteries in Kiev; and it was in his time that the Kievo-Pecherski monastery was built. During his reign (*нача вѣра хрестыянская плодится и расширяти*, Annals, 1037), he fought with the remnants of paganism (cf. his struggle with sorcerers, Annals, 1024). He has, of course, considerably more right to be regarded as the "affirmer of Christianity" than Yuri Dolgoruki, and particularly more so than Yuri Vsevolodovich. The Annals give a detailed account (1037) of his educational activities and of the organization of literary work in Kiev. St. George, in many variants of the song, is represented with "the book of the Gospels" in his hands.

But the establishing of roads, the pushing away of "grinding mountains," of impenetrable forests and uncrossable rivers, has also a real significance. From the Annals we know that Yaroslav sojourned not only in Kiev but in Novgorod (1024, 1036) and in Suzdal (1024); and that he undertook distant campaigns. These campaigns required the construction of roads: the formula *мосты мостити* (bridges, i.e., platforms) appears in the Annals precisely at the beginning of the account about Yaroslav, and it is repeated in "The Tale of Igor's Campaign" (*мосты мостити по болотомъ и грязивымъ мѣстомъ*). The civil war between Yaroslav and Sviatopolk resulted in the severing of the most important trade route between Scandinavia and Byzantium; Yaroslav's victory and the unification of the Kievan and Novgorodian princedoms under his control meant the re-opening of this most important route.

The struggle with wild beasts (herds of wolves or beasts), which George makes less dangerous for man and cattle by commanding them to eat what is "ordered" (apparently wild animals) meant, according to the conditions of that time, the cultural taming of the country.⁴² Vladimir Monomakh mentions his hunting exploits in his autobiography; the Annals inform us about Princess Olga's hunts, about Oleg Sviatoslavich's hunts (975), and the Galich-Volhynian Annals do not forget to mention Prince Vladimir Vasilkovich's good fortune (*вазнь*) in hunting (1292). We are reminded of the myths of Hercules as well. It is possible that the bird devouring a fish is likewise connected with the same image of the hero who conquers wild nature: George drives this bird away to the open ocean, commanding her to find her nourishment out there (instead of destroying the fish of the rivers and marine coasts). Otherwise, the bird in the song is enigmatic.⁴³ It usually sits on the gates of the Demianishche's castle.

Another episode of the song is undoubtedly connected with Yaroslav: the liberation of his sisters. According to the Annals, Bolesław left Kiev in 1018, "having taken Yaroslav's property and *boyars* and his sisters." Thietmar also notes: "*Ibi fuit noverca regis predicti [Yaroslav], uxor et VIII sorores ejusdem*" (VIII, 32). Among the sisters we meet Predslava, who is mentioned in the Annals. Among the captured *boyars*, or courtly servants, we notice Moisey Ugrin, whose life in Poland and liberation from captivity is told in the "Kievo-Pecherski Patericon" (beginning of the thirteenth cen-

ture). The captives were freed (according to the Patericon) in 1030 (or 1031), although some of them remained in Poland until 1043 (Annals). One should not interpret the word "Latin,"⁴⁴ found in some variants of the verse, as an indication of the captivity of Yaroslav-George's sisters in Catholic Poland. In the eleventh century the Eastern Slavs could hardly have had an intense consciousness of the enmity between the Eastern and Western Churches. Yaroslav could have married his daughters to Catholics (in addition to Elizabeth, his daughter Anna was married to the French King Henry, and other Russian princesses also married Catholic foreigners).⁴⁵ In any case, the ablution of the sisters in the Jordan shows that the author of the song in its original form had a sufficiently gloomy notion of Polish captivity, while the "falling away from Orthodox Faith" already consisted in leaving Kiev, a city "illuminated by the radiance of ikons, wrapped in incense, resounding with echoes of church singing" (Ilarion). The ablution of a woman after being freed from captivity can be found in Western epic poetry as well (Gudrun).

Demianishche is hardly Bolesław the Brave. He is rather a collective image of Yaroslav's enemies in general. "Sophia," the name of the mother who sends George on his journey over Rus', is related to Yaroslav's Sophia cathedrals. There is no explanation for the name "Theodore" and no reason for connecting it with Theodore of Smolensk, as is the case in one bad variant (Markov).

It is difficult to say how the "martyrdom" became connected with George's travels. The fact that both parts exist separately seems to indicate a recent union.⁴⁶ It is possible to imagine, however, the original existence of the song in the form of two parts: the martyrdom is borrowed from the apocryphal martyrdoms of a saint, while George's appearance upon Rus' represents, as it were, the coming of a "resurrected one," of a saint who comes out of a prison-dungeon upon Rus', comes as a princely organizer of the land, Yaroslav-George.

The image of Yaroslav-George in the song, of course, is very abstract, lacking any individual traits. But Hrushevsky is wrong in considering the portrait of Yaroslav (in the Annals—Hrushevsky does not know the epic song) as "colorless and characterless" when compared to the portrait of Vladimir the Saint. In epic tradition the image of Vladimir has become even more colorless, while in many of the *byliny* he has even acquired unpleasant traits: slyness, disloyalty to his word, and even lack of sense.

Who could have composed the "song" in its original form, and where and when was this done? The answer to the first question seems easy. Undoubtedly the song about Yaroslav-George is the work of an ecclesiastical author. Notable is the closeness of this song to the *byliny* of Dobrynia the dragon-fighter, most probably also the work of an ecclesiastical author.⁴⁷ "The hat of the Greek land" in the *bylina* of Dobrynia compels us, however, to seek its author among grecophil ecclesiastics (e.g., at the courts of grecophil princes such as Vladimir Monomakh and his son, the Saintly Prince Mstislav). The song about George, on the other hand, is free of any grecophilism: the enlightener of Rus' is its organizer, Yaroslav. That Yaroslav was anti-Greek in his church policy is shown by his attempt to establish a русиѣ, Ilarion, as metropolitan. This is also shown by Ilarion's "Word," where Vladimir the Saint's baptism is assigned to inner enlightenment and not to Greek missionary activity.

The question concerning the place of origin of the song is more complicated.

Yaroslav was undoubtedly popular not only in Kiev but also in Novgorod, where even a legend arose about some special tax and political privileges he granted to the city where he reigned in his youth. There was another legend about the particularly active participation of Novgorodians in Yaroslav's struggle for the Kievan throne. One must suppose that the song was created in the south: we do not have examples of northern epic works penetrating into the Ukraine and White-Russia, and this song about George was known there (although the Ugro-Russian texts of Hnatiuk do represent a later product of syllabic poetry, still Malynka's texts are from the Poltava Government). The names of "Kiev," "Chernigov," (and Jerusalem) could, of course, penetrate into the song from the *bylina* tradition, but it is characteristic that the name of Novgorod, although belonging to the same tradition, is not present in many of the variants.

The question concerning the age of the song is the most complicated of the three. Great age is supported by some details of language and content. A. Markov, who stresses the age of the song,⁴⁸ gives as proof, first of all, the word *порпеб* or *порпебá* in the meaning of "dungeon" (this use of the word is certified only up to the thirteenth century).⁴⁹ This would be convincing if the use of the word in the song could not have been influenced by the *bylina* of Michael Potok, also a dragon-fighter, who is confined in a *порпеб*; the *bylina* of Michael arose in the thirteenth century. Of course, the word "brave" (Yegori the Brave) is connected with the word *храбръ* (noun), the ancient equivalent of the word *bogatyr*. This word, too, was preserved only until the thirteenth century.⁵⁰ Above all, the great age of the song is supported by some details of the content, namely: Yaroslav's connection with Sophia, who is George's mother in almost all variants of the song; meanwhile, Yaroslav's veneration of St. Sophia, and the fact that it was he who built the St. Sophia cathedrals in Kiev and Novgorod, were apparently forgotten relatively early. Also essential is the role played in the song by the captivity and liberation from captivity of George-Yaroslav's sisters. But then, this is still remembered by an author of the Kievo-Pecherski Patericon, Policarp, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The attempts to see reflections of the Tatar invasion in Demianishche and in his attack on Tsar Theodore are completely unconvincing: while Tatars did replace in many of the *byliny* all the more ancient enemies of Rus', in this song about George the Tatars are not present. In only one variant is George's father, having merged here with his tormentor, a "Tatar ruler" (a father-tormentor of a saint can be found, for example, in the Life of St. Barbara also). The absence of references to the Tatars gives us the *terminus ad quem* for the origin of the song: the first half of the thirteenth century. It is possible, however, that the song arose soon after Yaroslav's death.⁵¹

NOTES

¹ On the occasion of the 900th anniversary of Prince Yaroslav's death. Translated from the Russian by Vadim Liapunov.

² I use here the artificial term *byliny*; the performers of the *byliny* themselves call them *stariny*. To acquaint oneself with contemporary views of the *byliny*, one should consider the following: Vsevolod Miller, *Ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti* (Moscow, 1925) III; R. Trautmann, *Die Volksdichtung der Grossrussen* (Heidelberg, 1935) I; D. Tschizewskij [Čiževsky], *Geschichte der altrussischen literatur im 11., 12., und 13. Jahrhundert. Kiever Epoche*. (Frankfort/Main,

1948). The new book by V. Propp, *Russkī geroichesky epos* (1955), suffers from considerable one-sidedness but presents much material.

³ There are very few works specifically devoted to religious songs. The best are: M. Speransky, *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost* (Moscow, 1917); V. Adrianova-Peretz, *Zhitie Alekseia, cheloveka Bozhia* (Peterburg, 1917). A partially convincing attempt to analyze the ideology of religious songs is given by G. Fedotov, *Stikhi dukhovnye* (Paris, 1935). Completely unsatisfactory is H. Stammeler, *Die geistliche Volksdichtung* (Heidelberg, 1939). In Soviet Russia one prefers to be silent concerning religious songs.

⁴ The best survey is in M. Hrushevsky, *Istoria ukrains'koi literatur* (Kiev-Lvov, 1923), I, 2. Briefly in my book, (above, n. 2), pp. 202-205. Compare also A. Veselovsky, *Yuzhno-russkie byliny* (St. Petersburg, 1881).

⁵ Excellent examples of analysis can be found in V. Miller's first essay. There are a number of successful analyses in Trautmann, too, although one cannot agree with many of his conclusions.

⁶ For analysis of the *bylina* of Dobrynia, see Trautmann, pp. 129-136. Concerning some other motifs: Rożniecki, *Varagiska minder i den russiske helteedigtning* (Copenhagen, 1914); B. M. Sokolov, *Germano-russkie otnoshenia v oblasti eposa, Uchenye zapiski Saratovskogo Universiteta* (1923), I, 3. The Christian bases of some of the *byliny* of Dobrynia are admitted by Soviet scholars, too; cf. Adrianova-Peretz and A. Nikiforov, *Istoria russkoi literatury Akademii nauk SSSR* (1941), I, 252, and E. Pomerantseva, *Ocherki istorii SSSR, IX-XIII vek* (Moscow, 1953), 211.

⁷ There is a general survey in Čiževsky (above, n. 2), pp. 174-199; also see below in discussion of song motifs, No. 4.

⁸ Čiževsky (above, n. 2), for examples on pp. 115 (St. Theodosius Pecherski), 248, 274-275 (sermons and story of Cyril of Turov).

⁹ J. Bédier, *Les légendes épiques* (Paris, 1914-21); also, E. Anichkov, *Yazychestvo i drevniaya Rus'* (St. Petersburg, 1914), 197 f, 200 ff; Hrushevsky, cited above; B. M. Sokolov, "O zhitiiom i apokrificheskom elemente v bylinakh," *Russkī filologicheski Vestnik*, LXXVI (1916), 3.

¹⁰ Besides Boyan's "songs" about Yaroslav, "The Tale" mentions, as remarkable years of the past, the "years of Yaroslav." Boyan is again mentioned at the end of "The Tale" as a "song-creator of the olden times of Yaroslav."

¹¹ A. Shakhmatov, *Rozyskaniia o drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh* (St. Petersburg, 1908). See the short exposition in my book, above cited, pp. 183-7.

¹² About this fragment, see R. Jakobson and M. Szeftel, "The Vseslav Epos," *Russian Epic Studies*, AFS Memoir No. 42 (1947). However, these events occurred after Yaroslav's death.

¹³ M. Hrushevsky, *Istoria Ukrains'koi Rusy* (Lvov, 1905), II. He indicates errors in the account of events as characteristics of epic narration, particularly errors of chronology, p. 9 ff. In the same place he indicates the epic number three!

¹⁴ A similar mixing of two styles, epic and ecclesiastical, appears in such monuments as "The Life of Alexander Nevsky" and "The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan." I consider this in greater detail in my book, "Stilprobleme der alt-slavischen Literatur" (in preparation).

¹⁵ These characteristics are also treated in detail in my forthcoming book, and there is a short exposition in my *Istoria ukrains'koi literatury* (New York, 1955), pp. 35-38.

¹⁶ See the work of A. Orlov, *Ob osobennostiakh formy drevne-russkikh istoricheskikh povestei* (Moscow, 1902); also, *Chtenia v Obschestve Istории i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh* (1902), 4.

¹⁷ See our *Altrussische Literaturgeschichte*, pp. 54-55. D. Likhachev's interpretation in the commentary to the edition of *Poviest' vremennykh let* (1952), II, seems completely unconvincing to me.

¹⁸ For literature on the "Kenningar": De Vries, *Altnordische Literatur* (Halle/S. I., 1941); Čiževsky, *Istoria ukrains'koi literatury*, pp. 35, 184.

¹⁹ Čiževsky, "On Alliteration in Ancient Russian Epic Literature," *Russian Epic Studies*, AFS Memoir No. 42 (1947).

²⁰ It should be noted that Yaroslav is encountered in Scandinavian epics as well—in the so-called "Eimund Saga," published in *Antiquités russes* (1852), II. See M. Pogodin, *Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo universiteta*, VIII (1834); cf. M. Hrushevsky, *Istoria* II, 16. There are some epic elements also in the Polish chronicle by Gallus (same place).

²¹ There is a good exposition in Trautmann (above, n. 2), pp. 210-215, but his analysis seems unsatisfactory to me, particularly the assigning of the *bylina* to the "Novgorodian" group.

²² Liashchenko, "The *Bylina* of Solovei Budimirovich and the Harold Saga," in The Symposium in Honor of A. Malein, *Sertum Bibliologicum* (Peterburg, 1922), pp. 94-137. His interpretation is accepted, among others, by Y. M. Sokolov, *Russkii fol'klor* (Moscow, 1938), p. 253; Adrianova-Peretz and Nikiforov (above, n. 6), p. 253 f; A. Robinson, *Istoria kul'tury drevnei Rusi* (1951), I:2, 153. V. Propp (above, n. 2), p. 166, denies that Solovei is a foreigner, since that "is not said" in the *bylina*. But in all variants of the *bylina* Solovei comes "from beyond the sea," i.e., from a land where the *bylina* assumes no Russians exist!

²³ See P. Miliukov's article in *Sbornik v chest' Vs. Millera* (Moscow, 1900), pp. 314-315.

²⁴ The Harold Saga and the poem assigned to him were published in *Antiquités russes*, II (above, n. 20). Harold's "Song" has been translated (very inexactly) into Russian several times by Bogdanovich, N. L'vov, Batiushkov, A. K. Tolstoj.

²⁵ See Kmita Chernobyl'sky's letter to Volovich, cited in article, above, n. 23.

²⁶ A. Kirpichnikov, *Sv. Georgi i Yegori Khrabryi* (St. Petersburg, 1879), Pt. I. See A. Veselovsky, *Razyskaniia v oblasti russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov* (St. Petersburg, 1881), I (also in *Zapiski Akademii Nauk*, [1881], III, 1-228). Nothing is contributed by the supplement in the same work, Pt. VI (*Zapiski XIV* [1891], 147-166), nor by the vast work of A. Rystenko, *Legenda o sv. Georgii i drakone* (Odessa, 1909), pp. 256-474, about religious songs. See below.

²⁷ I cite, as indicated, the following recordings in writing: V. Varentsov, *Sbornik russkikh dukhovnykh stikhov* (St. Petersburg, 1860)—1 text—as "V"; P. Bessonov, *Kaliki perekhozhie* (Moscow, 1861)—18 texts with variants, some White-Russian—as "B"; Romanov, *Bielorusskii sbornik* (1891), V—3 texts—as "R"; A. Malynka, *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* (1892)—Ukrainian text—as "Mal"; A. Markov, *Bielomorskii byliny* (Moscow, 1901)—2 texts—as "M"; M. Speransky, *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* (1901), L:3—1 text—as "S"; V. Hnatiuk, *Ugroruskii dukhovni virshi* (Lvov, 1902)—2 Ukrainian texts—as "H"; V. Dobrovol'sky, *Smolenskii etnograficheskii sbornik* (1903), IV—2 White-Russian texts—as "D"; A. Grigoriev, *Arkhangelskii byliny* (Moscow, 1904), I—2 White-Russian texts—as "G"; Otto, *Zhivaya Starina* (1906), I—1 text—as "Ot"; Onchukov, *Zhivaya Starina* (1907), I, II—4 texts—as "O"; E. Liatski, *Stikhi dukhovnye* (St. Petersburg, 1912)—1 new text—"L."

The length of the songs is about 225-250 lines. Some remarks about the content follow: George is born "in the time of Tsar Theodore," who is designated as his father only in some texts (V, B; variants to 105, 107, and variant, Ot. 108). The Tsar is not mentioned in B 109, 111, 112, 113, R 2. He is sometimes called "Theodore Stratilatos" (or similarly, e.g., B 98, 99, 103, 106), "Anochry" (B 115), "Yanuary" (Mal); he is "Theodore of Smolensk" in M 89, a "Tatar ruler" and simultaneously the tormentor of his son in B 110. His Mother is "Sophia," "Sochria" (B 115), "Alexandra" (B 2), "Ol'ga" (G); the mother is not mentioned in B 110. George's place of birth is mostly not named. It is "Jerusalem" in V, B 101, 103, 105, 108, 109, "Kiev" in G, "Chernigov" in B 104 and S, "Khlei" (Bethlehem) in B 111. The sisters are not mentioned in R 3 and D 1; there are two sisters in Ot. There is no description of George's appearance in V, B 101, 107, 109, 111, 113.

²⁸ We find only the tortures in B 112, 113, 114, in Hnatiuk, in 4 texts of Onchukov, and in Liatski. The second part alone is found in B 109 and in G 57. We note the peculiarities of some texts: the storm (and sometimes the vision preceding it) are "from Kiev" B 99, 100, S, "from Chernigov" (or "Chernograd") B 106, D 2, "from Rus'" B 108, "from Jerusalem" B 102, 103, 105. George comes out on "bright Rus'" V, L, B 100, 109, "on holy Rus'" B 101, 102, 105, 108, on "белы Руси" B 111, on "святу Русу" [*sic*] Mal, comes to Jerusalem B 101, 105, 108, Mal, to Chernigov (or Chernigrad or Chernograd) B 99, 104, 106, 115, S; almost always he finds there a church (it does not appear only, e.g., in B 102, 107, 111), and he always meets his mother. In some cases George's steed and arms are described in the style of the *byliny* (see V, B 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, Mal, G.).

²⁹ Symplegades, see Pauly-Wissowa II, Reihe A.7 (1931) 1170-1; the Argonauts sail through between colliding rocks (see in Apollonius of Rhodes). The remaining *zastavy* all appear in Russian fairy tales, although in different combinations.

³⁰ One's attention is drawn to the fact that, in contrast to fairy tale motifs, George does not

simply pass through the *zastavy* but removes them permanently; as to living creatures in particular, he commands them to discharge what has been "ordered" by God.

³¹ Tsar "Demianishche" carries George away sometimes to the "Latin" land (e.g., B 115), to the "Jewish land" (B 101), for the most part simply to a "foreign land." George is sawed by "Jewish saws" (B 105), he is locked up in the *pogreb* with "German locks" (B 98, 99), he is forced to accept the "Latin faith" (B 101, 105); only in the variant where George's father is a "Tatar ruler," is the "Tatar faith" (B 110). George persuades his sisters to discard "Latin garments" (B 101), to reject the "Latin faith" (B 101, 105 variant). But for the most part the concern is with the "odor"—"infidel," "impure," "Mussulman" (most frequent) and even "serpentine" (V), which George's sisters absorbed while pasturing the "herd of serpents" and while living in a "foreign land." The bathing in the Jordan is mostly characterized as an ablution, and rarely as "baptizing" (B 102).

³² See note 28.

³³ The only recording of such a variant with a pronounced *bylina* tint is in Markov, pp. 150 ff. But even here, after the tortures, George frees his sisters from captivity, makes them bathe in the "River Jordan," and returns to his mother. Incomprehensible is Rystencko's assertion that both parts of the song do not appear separately, and the fusing of this variant of Markov with that of Grigoriev, who knows only the journey. See Rystencko, p. 297.

³⁴ Cited in note 26. "Conclusions" are found on pp. 471-474.

³⁵ See, e.g., D. Shepping, "Etudes . . . I," *Filologicheskie zapiski*, II (1884), 71-82.

³⁶ See Kirpichnikov (n. 26).

³⁷ I. Porfiriev, *Istoria russkoi literatury* (Kazan, 1876), p. 307.

³⁸ F. Buslayev, *Narodnaya poezia* (1887), p. 453. Similar also is Fedotov (above, n. 3), p. 73.

³⁹ Tikhonravov, *Sochinenia* I, 254.

⁴⁰ P. Bessonov (above, n. 27), Rystencko (above, n. 26), p. 306, Shchapov in *ZhMNP* I (1863), 27-28.

⁴¹ B. M. Sokolov's article "Religious Songs" in *Literaturnaya Enciklopedia* (1930), III, p. 608, and also Sokolov (above, n. 22), p. 111. Fedotov (above, n. 3), p. 111, notes correctly that the hero of the verse "does not fight, but subdues nature and organizes the land through the power of his word," and this precisely corresponds to the actions of a ruler, not a military leader.

⁴² Not too convincing is the derivation of all motifs connected with the taming of living creatures by George from the folk worship of him as protector of cattle; compare Veselovsky (above, n. 2), pp. 59 ff, and other places; in Rystencko's opinion wolves are mentioned in the song "simply because" forests are mentioned (p. 308), while the bird is an "insertion from the *Golubinaya Kniga*" (p. 309); the serpents are "borrowed" from the *malyi stikh* (p. 258), etc. In the new book, *Russkoe narodnoye poeticheskoye tvorchestvo* (1953), I, the authors of the corresponding article (M. Skripil' and B. Putilov), in agreement with the contemporary tendency of relating all motifs to politics, see "Mongols" in the serpents and find a "Tatar theme" in the song (p. 299).

⁴³ May one imagine an enemy of fishing in the monstrous bird? To regard the bird, perched on the gates of Demianishche's castle, as a reflection of the Polish coat-of-arms, an eagle, is difficult because the legend of how Yaroslav's enemy, Bolesław the Brave, received this coat-of-arms from the Emperor Otto III in 999-1000 must be considered a later legend; the eagle became the Polish coat-of-arms probably only in the 14th century. See S. Zakrzewski, *Bolesław Chrobry* (1926), p. 111 ff, about the war with Yaroslav, 246 ff; A. Brueckner, *Encyklopedia staropolska* (1939), II, 58-59. Even Veselovsky, (p. 145) "felt himself unable to give an explanation" about the appearance of the bird in the song. The name of the bird (Naga, Noga, Naga-Astrakhir, Ostrafil, Stratim, Chernogon, Chernogar), even Lev (Lion) and Varabei [*sic*], gives no indication of her origin. In one text (B 107) George is met by a *flock* of "pecking" birds, by "Nogaishchina," perhaps a "Tatar theme."

⁴⁴ See above, n. 31. In contrast to motifs preserved in all variants, the word "Latin," encountered only sporadically, must be regarded as a later insertion.

⁴⁵ See also the survey in the works of N. Baumgarten, M. Hrushevsky, *Istoria*, II, 29-34, B. Grekov, *Kievskaya Rus'* (1848), p. 481 ff.

⁴⁶ See note 28.

⁴⁷ A detailed comparison of the song with the *bylina* of Dobrynia was made by Rystencko (pp. 344-364); unfortunately, here also he makes numerous strained conclusions and doubtful assertions.

⁴⁸ Markov, "Opredelenie khronologii dukhovnykh stikhov," *Bogoslovski Vestnik* (1910), concerning the song of Yegori: No. 6, pp. 359-361. The discussions of the decline of Kiev and Chernigov as the latest date of the appearance of the verse must be regarded as doubtful: the names of both cities were probably already part of the epic tradition in the 13th century.

⁴⁹ Sreznevsky, *Materialy*, II, 1020.

⁵⁰ In the same work, III, 1394.

⁵¹ I note that Speransky in *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost'*, p. 284, speaks (without argumentation) about the account of George's deeds as being "reflections of a Russian legend about the earliest times of Christianity in Russia." But Speransky (same place) connects the origin of the legend only with the popularity of George's name during Yaroslav's reign. For V. Sipovsky "St. George is the embodiment of the cultural power of Christianity" (*Russkie povesti* [St. Petersburg, 1905], p. xxx). Rysteneko, p. 337, admits the existence in the 11th century only of *malyi stikh*, which entirely goes back to the apocryphal legend of George's battle with the dragon.

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THE OSSETIAN TALE OF IRY DADA AND MSTISLAV

BY GEORGE VERNADSKY AND DZAMBULAT DZANTY

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. *Mstislav and Rededya in Old Russian Literature.* Prince Mstislav of Tmutorokan', son of Vladimir the Saint, was one of the most colorful characters in the Russian political life of the eleventh century. His capital, Tmutorokan', represented an important outpost of Russian political and commercial influence in the Southeast. The Russians faced there two vigorous Caucasian peoples, the Alans (the Yasy or Asy of the Russian chronicles) and the Kasogi (Circassians). Mstislav's grandfather, Svyatoslav, had extended his suzerainty over both these peoples, but not for long. According to the Russian Annals (*Povest' Vremennykh Let*) Mstislav succeeded in restoring Russian authority over the Kasogi. The episode is described in the *Povest'*, under A.M. 6530 (A.D. 1022) in the following words:

At this time Mstislav, who was in Tmutorokan', attacked the Kasogians. When Rededya, Prince of the Kasogians, heard the report, he went forth against him, and as both armies stood face to face, Rededya said to Mstislav, "Why do we destroy our forces by mutual warfare? Let us rather fight in single combat ourselves. If you win, you shall receive my property, my wife, and my children. But if I win, I shall take all your possessions." Then Mstislav assented to his proposal. Rededya thus suggested that they should wrestle instead of fighting with weapons. They straightway began to struggle violently, and when they had wrestled for some time, Mstislav began to tire; for Rededya was large and strong. Then Mstislav exclaimed, "Oh Virgin Mother of God, help me. If I conquer this man, I will build a church in thy name." Having spoken thus, he threw the Kasogian to the ground, then drew his knife and stabbed Rededya. He then penetrated into his territory, seized all his property, his wife, and his children, and imposed tribute upon the Kasogians. When he returned to Tmutorokan', he then founded a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin and built it, as it stands in Tmutorokan' even to the present day.¹

It is supposed that this story was recorded by the monk Nikon the Great at the time he was banned from Kiev and stayed in Tmutorokan' (1061-65). His account was incorporated into the *Povest'*. Nikon must have used some old local legends about Mstislav.² As we know from the "Tale of the Raid of Igor'" (*Slovo o Polku Igoreve*), Mstislav's duel with Rededya was also used by the famous poet Boyan as a theme for one of his epic poems. Here is the *Slovo's* evidence: "But indeed Boyan did not loose ten falcons on a flock of swans, my brethren, but laid his own magic fingers upon the living strings, and they would of themselves sound forth the glory of the princes—of Yaroslav of old, of valiant Mstislav, who cut down [zareza] Rededya before the Cherkess hosts, of fair Roman, the son of Svyatoslav."³ Unfortunately, Boyan's poems, including that on Mstislav, have not reached us.

1.2. *The Search for Rededya in Circassian Folklore.* It would be natural to suppose that the combat between Mstislav and Rededya was reflected not only in the

Russian epos but also in the epos of the other side, of the people whom Rededya represented in the combat. Since in the *Povest'* Rededya was called a Kasogian prince, attempts were made to discover in the folklore of the Circassians, descendants of the Kasogi of old, traces of an epic poem on Rededya.

In 1835-43 a Kabardian, Shora Bekmurzin Nogmov, who at that time served as a secretary of the Kabardian court, wrote in Russian a history of the Adyge (Circassian) people. This work was published posthumously in 1861. Five years later a German translation appeared under the editorship of Adolf Bergé.⁴ Among other events of early Circassian history, Nogmov described a conflict between the Adyge and the "Tamtarakaier" (Tmutorokanians) which culminated in the wrestling duel between the Adygian hero, Rededya, and the Prince of the Tmutorokanians. As in the Russian *Povest'*, the Prince of Tmutorokan', whom Nogmov identified as Mstislav, overcame Rededya and slew him with his knife. Several years later, according to Nogmov, the Adyge asked the Ossetians for assistance, and with the help of the Ossetian army, 6,000 strong, defeated the Tmutorokanians and conquered Tmutorokan'.

Around 1890 a Russian student of Caucasian folklore, L. G. Lopatinsky, became interested in Nogmov's story of Rededya and went to Karmovo (Nogmov's native *aul* [village]) to try to find traces of it and asked several Kabardians to search for it. One of them, Urustam Nogmov (Shora's son), was not able to find anything. Another, an alumnus of the Transcaucasian Teachers College, Pago Tambiev, heard and wrote down a legend of a valiant woman (not named in the story) who first terrorized her father-in-law and then saved her tribe by overcoming in a combat two enemy warriors. After her victory, her people greeted her with the words "Ou ridade makho," i.e., "O fortunate *ridade*." This word *ridade* Tambiev explained as "Rededya" and concluded that that was the woman's name. In 1911 the late Prince Nicholas S. Trubetzkoy decided to investigate the case once more.⁵ He found among the Circassians no traces of the Rededya tale but heard and wrote down the following refrain of the Circassian wedding songs: "Ūorède, ūoreddède, ūoreddède mafe," which means "O song of all songs, fortunate song." This, according to Trubetzkoy, is the source of *ridade* in Tambiev's legend. Trubetzkoy thinks that Tambiev, being instructed by Lopatinsky to discover the Rededya tale, took the refrain "ūoreddède" for the name Rededya. As to Shora Nogmov's story of the duel, Trubetzkoy believes that he simply borrowed it from the Russian *Povest'*.

Thus the search for Rededya in Circassian folklore ended in a failure. There is no evidence that the story belonged to Circassian folklore. Besides, the very name Rededya proved to be not a Circassian name. As is obvious now, owing to Dzambulat Dzanty's studies, the tale of "Rededya" actually existed in the epos of a Caucasian people, but among the Ossetians, not among the Circassians. The name Rededya proved a distorted form of the Ossetian "Iry Dada"—"Father of the Iron (Ossetians)."

In order better to understand the meaning of the Ossetian tale, we have first to clarify the historical background of Ossetian-Circassian and Russian-Ossetian inter-relations.

1.3. *The Alanic-Kasogian and Alanic-Russian Relations.* In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Alans occupied a considerable part of the North Caucasian area and a section of Transcaucasia (the present day South Ossetia). A number of Alans lived in the Crimea, and two groups of them were firmly established in the Donets-Don

basin; one in the upper Donets and the other in the Don region. These groups were located in the area occupied by Turkish nomads, first by the Pechenegi and then by the Polovtsy. According to an Arabic writer of the early tenth century, Ibn-Rusta, the Alans who lived in the Caucasus were divided into four tribes. The noblest of them, the one to which the king belonged, was called Ruks-As.⁶

The Kasogi lived in the Kuban valley. The noted Arabic geographer of the late tenth century, Mas'udi, states that Kasogi (whom he calls Kashak) were not united under one king and were weaker than the Alans.⁷ In the Persian geographic treatise of the late tenth century, "The Regions of the World" (*Hudud al-Alam*), Kasogia (Kasak) is called "a land of the Alans,"⁸ which means that the Kasogi at that time recognized the suzerainty of the Alans.

It is in the light of this evidence that we may best approach the conflict between Mstislav and Rededya. Since the Kasogi were under Alan suzerainty, any attempt of Mstislav to conquer them was bound to provoke a conflict between the Russians and the Alans. The Kasogian troops must have been commanded by Alanic princes. Following the duel between Mstislav and Rededya, the Russians and the Alans must have come to an agreement of some kind. Presumably, the Alanic suzerainty over the Kasogi was replaced by that of the Russians. According to the *Povest'*, Mstislav imposed tribute upon the Kasogi. That tribute was still collected by Prince Rostislav of Tmutorokan' in 1066.⁹ Part of the Kasogi joined Mstislav's *druzhina*. It seems that some of the Alans likewise volunteered to enter Mstislav's service. These became known as *izgoi*, from the Ossetian word *iskæj* which means "alien" and also "hireling."¹⁰ With the help of the Kasogian and Alanic Warriors, Mstislav succeeded in defeating the armies of his brother Yaroslav of Kiev and in establishing himself as Prince of Chernigov (1024). Some of his Kasogian retainers appear to have received lands for settlement in the basin of the Psyol River. (*Psyol* means "water" in Circassian.)

According to the *Povest'*, Mstislav, after his victory over Rededya, seized the latter's wife and children. From the *Povest'* we must conclude that Rededya's widow became Mstislav's lawful wife. No other marriage of Mstislav is mentioned in the *Povest'*, and yet there is an entry under 1033 about the death of his son, Eustafi.¹¹ I shall discuss the problem of Mstislav's marriage in more detail in the next section of this study, and now note only that, in the light of the preceding argument, the lady Mstislav married must have been an Alanic and not a Kasogian princess.

With the people of the Alans, Mstislav apparently concluded a treaty of alliance. This friendship enabled the Russians to expand their influence in the Caucasus and even to penetrate into Transcaucasia. As V. F. Minorsky has recently shown, a Russian flotilla operating in the Caspian Sea reached Shirvan in 1030. The Russians defeated the Shirvanshah's troops at Baku, after which they intervened in the civil war in Arran (Ganja) and helped a rebellious local prince to seize the town of Baylakan. From there they returned home loaded with rich booty through Byzantine territory (presumably through Trapezund). According to Minorsky's plausible suggestion, their home was in Tmutorokan'. In 1032 the Russians repeated their raid on Shirvan. This time they went back through Daghestan but were attacked by the amir of Derbend and lost most of their men and all their booty. In the next year the Alans and the Russians attacked Derbend in retaliation but failed to take it.¹²

In the early twelfth century the Russians withdrew from 'Tmutorokan' because of the increased pressure of the Polovtsy and thus lost immediate contact with the Alans in the Caucasus. On the other hand, they entered into close relations at this time with the Alans in the Don basin. These latter, it will be recalled, lived in the territory controlled by the Polovtsy. In 1111 the Russian princes, headed by Svyatopolk of Kiev and Vladimir Monomakh (then Prince of Pereyaslav), undertook a successful campaign against the Polovtsy and reached the town of Sharukan on the Don River, the center of the Alanic settlements there. The inhabitants of the town went out to greet the Russians and offered them fish and wine. Five years later, Vladimir Monomakh (at that time Prince of Kiev) organized another vigorous campaign against the Polovtsy. Vladimir's son, Yaropolk, assisted by another Russian prince, again entered the Don area and occupied the towns of Sugrov, Sharukan, and Balin. All three of them were, presumably, populated by the Alans and we may think that all of them accepted the Russians as friends. Yaropolk married the daughter of the local Alanic prince, described in the Kievan chronicle as "very beautiful" (*krasna velmi*). She was given the name of Elena.¹³

In the second half of the twelfth century several other Russian princes married Alanic princesses.¹⁴ Around 1156 Prince Andrey Bogolyubsky, after the death of his first wife (of whom nothing is known), married an Ossetian girl (her name is unknown). Their son, Yuri, emigrated to the Caucasus and (around 1177) married the Queen of Georgia, Tamar. Around 1178 Andrey's brother, Vsevolod of Suzdal, nicknamed "The Big Nest," married the Ossetian princess Maria. Among her descendants by this marriage were the grand dukes and the first two tsars of Moscow. In 1182 Prince Michael of Chernigov (who was later to be killed by the Mongols at Kalka) married an Ossetian princess (her name is not known). Finally, around 1185, Prince Yaroslav, son of Prince Vladimir of Dorogobuzh, likewise took an Ossetian bride (name unknown).

1.4. *Ossetian Tale*. Ossetian folklore is rich and varied.¹⁵ While it has been studied for many years by generations of scholars—Ossetian, Russian, and Western—there still are many aspects of it which need further investigation. Of the heroic songs of the Ossetians the legends of the Narts are best known. Many of them are available in Russian translation and some also in French.¹⁶ The Narts are neither gods nor ordinary men. They are giants of supernatural strength comparable in some respects to the Nordic Aesir. "At the time when Heaven and Earth were not yet completely separated from one another, I was already living as a man of mature years," says one of the Narts, Sozryko, son of Uryzmax and Satána.¹⁷ The Nartian cycle of Ossetian tales may be called mythological in its essence.

The tale (*kadæg*; plural, *kadægtæ*) of Iry Dada is of a different nature. It is an historical tale even though its main hero, Iry Dada himself, is a semi-legendary figure. In a sense, Iry Dada is a living link between mythology and history, between the mysterious origin of the Alanic people and their historic deeds. He also symbolizes the miraculous and tragic destiny of the Alans.

The tale of Iry Dada consists of several parts or themes. One of them corresponds to the theme of the *Povest'* story of Mstislav and Rededya. However, the treatment of it in the Ossetian tale differs greatly from that of the *Povest'*.

In the *Povest'*, Rededya is represented as the reigning prince of the Kasogi and as

a married man with family. After overcoming him, Mstislav marries his widow.

In the Ossetian tale, Iry Dada, although respectfully called "prince," is not a reigning prince, nor is he commander of the Alanic army. He has apparently no family. He is a lonely old man, a hero, not a statesman. Besides, the duel in the Ossetian tale is not a prelude to marriage (as in the *Povest'*), but the result of a tragic misunderstanding between Mstislav and his Alanic bride, Nado, of the Burgalty clan. The marriage is not described in the tale (in any case, not in the variant written down by Dzambulat Dzanty). The tale (not counting the foreword to Iry Dada) starts with a brief account of the coming of Mstislav's matchmakers to the country of the Alans. This section also contains a poetical description of Nado's beauty and a note of Mstislav's returning to Russia with his bride after the wedding. Then follows the story of Mstislav's messenger announcing to the Alans the birth of his and Nado's son. The central part of the *kadæg* is devoted to the description of the Russo-Alanic celebration in the White Castle, and of the triple tragedy which occurred there and caused the break between the Alans and the Russians. Next comes the duel between Mstislav and Iry Dada, and then the double duel between Nado's brother, Prince Amat, and two Russian princes. When the Alans are satisfied that they "took the blood due them," a treaty of permanent peace is solemnly concluded.

The absence of a description of the wedding in the tale may be accidental. However, in view of the fact that there were many marriages between Ossetian princesses and Russian princes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is possible that other stories about these marriages were composed and that the description of some other wedding (as, e.g., that of Elena to Yaropolk, 1116) in one of those tales became so popular that similar accounts were omitted at the recital of the other tales, including that of Iry Dada.

It is almost inevitable that with every new generation the memorizers and reciters of unwritten tales, in spite of all their deep respect for the old traditions, should introduce some slight changes into the details of the story to adapt it to the new circumstances. Thus, in the late variants of some of the Russian *byliny* of the so-called Kievan cycle, composed long before the Mongol invasion, the Tatars appear on the scene instead of the Polovtsy. There is some evidence of similar later adaptations in the Ossetian tale as well. For example, in it Mstislav is supposed to reign in Kiev, not in Tmutorokan'. And yet, at the time of the duel of 1022, the Caucasian Alans must have known very well that Mstislav was Prince of Tmutorokan', not of Kiev. On the other hand, at the time of Elena's marriage to Yaropolk, Kiev was the center of the Russian state headed by Yaropolk's father, Vladimir Monomakh. After the latter's death (1125) his eldest son, Mstislav, became the Prince of Kiev; and he was succeeded after death in 1132 by Yaropolk. It is possible that in this period the reciters of the *kadægtæ*, especially among the Alans of the Don area, made the Mstislav of old Prince of Kiev.

While many historical tales tend to present, and some actually do present, an accurate description of the events, no historical tale is a straight historical treatise. If it were, there would have been no difference between folklore and written learned literature. On the other hand, in all historical tales, at the base of even those stories which may seem fantastic and purely imaginative, there usually lies recollection of an actual event which for one reason or other fired the people's imagination.

Let us consider from this point of view the story of the Alanic-Russian banquet

with the ensuing tragedy, as described in the tale of Iry Dada. In itself the story is quite vivid and realistic. It could have happened. The question is, whether it happened to Mstislav. If it did, it seems strange that no trace of it was preserved in the Russian chronicles or in Russian folklore. Once more we have to deplore the loss of Boyan's poem, which must have been the most precious Russian report on Mstislav. In the terse account of the *Slovo* only eight words are devoted to the Mstislav-Rededya episode: *ḱhrabromu Mstislavu izhe zareza Rededyu pred polky Kasozhskymi*. Consequently, we do not know whether, according to Boyan, Rededya was the reigning prince of the Kasogi (i.e., Alans) or not; whether Rededya had a wife or not; and whether Mstislav married a Kasogian (i.e., Alanic) princess before or after his duel with Rededya. We therefore cannot say whether Boyan's story contradicted the Ossetian tale or agreed with it. We have then to choose between the version of the *Povest'* and that of the *ḱadæg*, without the benefit of Boyan's evidence.

If we accept the *Povest'* story, then the tragic episode at the celebration should be considered not an original part of the Iry Dada tale but a later interpolation. But what event could have served as the base of that interpolation?

As far as we know, all of the Alanic-Russian marriages of the twelfth century proved happy, with one exception—that of Andrey Bogolyubsky's second marriage. While little is known of it, we may suspect that something was wrong. In the story of Andrey's assassination (1175) in the Russian chronicles¹⁸ there is no mention of his widow, the Alanic princess. Consequently we must think that either she had died before her husband or had left him. After Andrey's death their son Yuri was banned by his half-brothers (Andrey's sons by his first marriage). Consider also the fact that among the conspirators against Andrey was his steward (*ḱliuchnik*), an Alan called Anbal.¹⁹ It is well known that loyalty to one's friend or chieftain is a traditional feature in the character of the Alans. It is therefore hardly conceivable that Anbal should have joined the conspiracy against Prince Andrey for any motive except that of avenging an offense on the part of Andrey against Alanic honor, most probably an offense against the honor of the Alanic princess or some of her kin. "Blood is washed off by blood" (Iry Dada, verse 136).²⁰ If there actually had been a tragic conflict between Andrey and his Alanic wife, as I surmise, such an episode could have constituted the nucleus of a tale which later could have been included in the *ḱadæg* of Iry Dada.

Irrespective of the question whether the tale of Iry Dada is monolithic or consists of parts belonging to different periods, the *ḱadæg* is, in my opinion, a jewel of epic literature. It is permeated with old traditions and is of great value for the student of Russian and Alanic history and folklore. Its basic historical conception—that of an early conflict between the Russians and the Alans followed by a long period of friendship—is corroborated by the evidence of other sources available to us.

2. DZAMBULAT DZANTY'S FOREWORD TO IRY DADA

2.1. *Ossetian Text*. Razdzyrd. Acy *ḱadæg* "Iry Dada" æz fequston næ Iry Chajty 1910 azy. Æz dæn mæxædæg Kudzygusty chajjag, æmæ ju, ally bærægbon, mæ Alon bydirag bæxyl cydtæn Styr Iry Chajmæ, Khulyxy *ḱadægtæm* bajqusynmæ. Urs začy zæronð læg, card junægæj, dardta dukani, æmæ ænæmæguræj cardi.

Kud nuffyston uj cardy xat—aftæmæj jæ radzurdzynæn. Khulyx myn zaxta: "Mæ mad æmæ mæ fyðæn æz uydtæn sæ junæg qæbul, uyjdær khulyx razyndi. Cypærkhaxæg qædtag

birəhau, cyppar azy raxil-bahil kodton nə kərtı khumty. Ju bon k'uydi, uəd-dyn, mə fyđ Məzdəđzy, Buhultəj, ju Aldaryl symbəld, əmə-mən ku fedta, uəd-mə fyđən zahta: Əz məxi xardzəj amən qədyn khax sarazyn kəndzynən, əmə cəuyn rajdajdzən.

Maxən Məzdəđzy uydis xorz xədzar, əmə-nəm card ju grekhag, jə binontimə; jə dyuə lappuiy-fazzədtə, m'amgar uydysty.

Mə qədyn khax-mə fərvəzyn kodta. Dyuə grekhag læppuyimə əz ironau, uydon-tə grekhagau, əmə aftəməj, az grekhagau, uydon-ta ironau, saxurystəm. Fonz azy Məzdəgəj nə chajtəm ne'rbacydtən. Nudəs azygkonəj ne'rvadəltəj zərond læg, Khasaray komı čı card, akodta mən Dzəudzyqəumə. Zarynmə dəsny uydten, əmə qisyn fəndyrəj-dər-mə saxurkodtoj zərədtə, xoxmə ku acydtən uəd.

Fəstəmə ərbacydtən Xoxəj Məzdəgmə. Dəs əmə əssədz azy-myl ku racyd, uəd ərbəstondən nəxi Styr Iry Chajy, dukani dzy bajgom kodton, əmə mənə cəryn məxicən, zaryn Iron Narton Kadəgtə, nə Fydəltı-Fydəltə kud cardysty uj, əmə, max cəmə ərxaudtam. . . .

Birə Kadəgtə fyst ərcydysty, fələ grekhag damyhəttəj, əmə cə čı'mbary. . . .”
Nə Khulyxəj əz dər bazydton birə—əmə cə kud fequston, aftəməj cə radzurdzynən.

2.2. *Translation by George Vernadsky.* I heard this tale in an Ossetian village in 1910. I am a native of the village Kudzugusty, and I used to ride on my Alanic horse²¹ on every folk festival to the village of Great Iron (Bolshoe Osetinskoe) to hear the tales of Khulyx (the Lame One). That old white-bearded man used to live alone, kept a store and was fairly well off. He had a wooden leg. I will tell you what I heard from him about his life.

[Khulyx's Story] I was the only child of my father and mother—and this[only child] proved lame. On all four, like a wild wolf's cub, I used to crawl about the yard. One day my father met in Mozdok the elder, Buhultəj. When he saw me, he told my father: "I will have a wooden leg made for this [child] at my cost, and he will be able to walk." We had a good house in Mozdok, and a Greek with his family lodged at our house. He had two twin boys of my age. My wooden leg saved me [from disability]. I conversed with the two Greek boys (I in Ossetian and they in Greek) and so I learned Greek, and they, Ossetian. For five years I did not leave Mozdok and did not visit our farm. When I was nineteen, a relative of ours, an old man from the Khasara Valley, who lived there, took me to the town of Dzəudzyqəu (Vladikavkaz), and from there to the mountains. I was a good singer, and in the mountains I mastered playing the lyre. From the mountains I went back to Mozdok. When I was thirty I settled in this village of Great Iron, opened a store, and so I live by myself and sing the Ossetian Nartian tales of our forefathers, of how they lived. O how low have we fallen! I wrote down many tales, but in Greek letters—who will understand them?

From our Khulyx I also learned many tales, and I will submit them as I heard them.

2.3. *Additional Information from Dzambulāt Dzanty.*²² "I heard and wrote down the tale 'Iry Dada' in the village of Great Iron (Bolshoe Osetinskoe) at the time of hay-making (*xosgərdən*) June, 1910. . . . Khulyx was a poet himself and in some of his own works followed the patterns of the old Ossetian oral traditions. Many of his poems were learned by heart and sung [by Ossetians], especially those in which he deplored the shortcomings and mistakes of some of his fellow Ossetians. He must be remembered [in Ossetia] even now. He was over seventy in 1910 but in spite of his age was quite lively and used to sing the old tales at all folk festivals. . . . Three brothers, descendants of the old Ossetian clan, Burgalty, lived in the village Senkhay around three verstes [two miles] from the town of Mozdok. I often visited this family, saw their clan emblem (*damyhə*), and asked them about the 'Iry Dada.' The elder Burgalty told me: 'Khulyxəj xuzdər max dissag niči zony' (no one knows our wonder tale better than Khulyx)."

3. IRY DADA (IRON KADÆG)—OSSETIAN TEXT²³

Razdzyrd

- (1) Næ Fydæltý-Fydæltæy. . . . Acy æmbisond—Alanty Kadæg—maxæn ku bazzad. . . .
- (2) Næ Nærtón Dada' Uæd Lægæj-Lægma' Xæsty Bydyry' . . . Sajdæj. . . .
- (3) Iskæj Aldary khuxæj. . . . Mard . . . kud ærcyd. . . .
- (4) O IRY DADA! . . . O IRY DADA! . . .
- (5) Jæ Gury daræg-Lægæn—jæ cæsgom . . . ju armydzagæg—fyldær ku næuy. . . .
- (6) Ægas Dunæjjæn—uæd kud ravdisa: Fydæltæg bazzajgæ—Ruxs Alon cæsgom? . . .
- (7) O IRY DADA! O IRY DADA! . . .
- (8) Næ Nærtón Zæronðæn—jæ urs rixitæ . . . æmæ jæ začý . . . Dadajæn jæ tug—max kud nyuadzæm?
- (9) ÆmKhordæg zahtoj Iron Nyxasy—Næ Nomad Lægtæ. . . .
- (10) O IRY DADA! O IRY DADA!
- (11) Æmæ kud ærcyd—acy æmbisond? . . . Alanty Bæsty . . . Chæxnæu Bydyrty?
- (12) Uy uyn radzurdzæn, jæ særæg bynmæ—næ Iron Fændyr jæ qisyn tæntæg. . . .
- (13) O IRY DADA! O IRY DADA!
- (14) Næ Nomad Zæronð Næ Buc Ruxs Ældar! Dy kæmæn uydta? Dy kæmæn naldæ? . . .
- (15) Alanty Æmbisondæg—xajdžyn ci faci. . . .
- (16) O IRY DADA! O IRY DADA!
- (17) Dy kæmæn uydta, dy kæmæn naldæ, næ uarxon zæronð? . . . Dodoj fækænæt, Alanty Bæstæ. . . .
- (18) Dardæg ærdtyvtoj, zældag ærduztæg, dæ ruxs začýtæ, ævzist chititæu, næ Iry Dada. . . .
- (19) Dæ sau bæxyl-ju, ku'rbacægcydta . . . dæ ræhæutimæ, dæ xast fosimæ. . . . Khasara xoxyl. . . .
- (20) Dzyrd-dyn ku radta, Syhdæg Barastyr: Ku dæ ju fændæ, uæd ju—ærbacu mæ Thæpæn Qæumæ. . . .
- (21) Dæ zæronð æšcitæn—bumbuli goban. Dæ Syhdæg Uydæn ta—Syrx-Zærin Mæsyg, Ruxs Nyvtæg aræst. . . .
- (22) Uælarvæg ærvyst, dæ sarhy bæxtæ, ævzist bardžyntæ . . . Næuæg Mæjta-dyn—dæ cyrgh æxsargard. . . .
- (23) Uælarvy komæg, uj či fequstæ—næ Barastyræn jæ Saudaratæg: Mærdtæg næ tærsy. . . .
- (24) Tæbputdzinad-dær, zæxxyl næ zyda . . . uymæn næuærsta: nædær jæ Uydyl . . . nædær Jæxiul. . . .
- (25) Kadæg radzurdzæn—æznadzy khuxæg, uj kud fæmardi . . . Mstislavy kardæg. . . .
- (26) Bægu uydysty, Qarym-Xur Bæstæg, Xurnygulynmæ, Uæræx bydyrtæ, Alanty khuxy. . . .
- (27) Biræ ingæntæ, uym maxæg bazzad. . . . Ædtagon ædæmtæ—uym ærcardysty. . . .
- (28) Sæ Særdar burxil, jæ nom—Mstislav. . . . Toxar aksar læg. . . . Uæzdan bæx-baræg. . . .

Minaevaerdtæ

- (29) (Ædtagon adæm fænd skodtoj Alantimæ xæstægdzinad bakæny, uymæ gæsgæ arvystoj sæ minæværdtæ cyžg kurynmæ sæ Padcaxæn.)
- (30) Kæd—agkag kænut max xæstægdzinad . . . uæd bafidauæm Tærxony lægtæ . . . Abon maximæ. . . .
- (31) We'hðau-mæ gæsgæ, max uyn uæ cyzdžy næ Buc Ældaræn, binontæn kuræm. . . . Nomad Alantæ!
- (32) Nyr—ku bajjuæm. . . . Maxæg tyxdžyndær a zæxy charyl, adæm næ uydzæn—bælvyrdæg zonut. . . .

- (33) Æbpæty ræsuhd Alanty Bæsty, dissadžy uyndžyn Xuræj nyv fyst cyžg: Burgalty Nado. . . .
- (34) Dissagæn bazzad: jæ naræg astæu, jæ nærtan kondæj, jæ cæsty ængas, jæ uæzdan racyd. . . .
- (35) Syrx-Zærin dzygku—jæščiltæm xaudta . . . uæd jæ Simgæy, uæd Zilgæ kafty, uæd Čepenay. . . .
- (36) Uymæj xærzkondtær či razyndayd, uj či rakurdtæ, ædtagon Ældar—dæ fægqau fæci. . . .
- (37) Axæm amondžyn uj kæm uydaid. . . . Alanty ræssuhd—jæ khaj ku fæci, uæd arast Mstislav
- (38) Kiev saxar—mæ, jæ guræn bæstæm. . . . Zargæ, qældzægæj. . . . Jæ tyrysayl—Iron damyhæ. . . .
- (39) Afædz næ racyd jæ cyndzæxsævyl, aftæ dyn ju bon, Nadojæn læppu Mstislavæj rajgurd. . . .
- (40) Ju xærzægkuræg ædtagon barag, Burgalty kærty, jæ bæxæj raxyst, æmæ amony:
- (41) Jæ bon kud uydi tyxxæj—fydæjtæj. . . . Uæd Alantædyn—uj ku bambærstoj . . . uædyn læværdtæ
- (42) Dædtync fyr cinæj, ævzag næ zony ædtagon baræg—khuxtæj amony. . . . Næcæ æmbary. . . .
- (43) Noggurd Ældaræn, æbpæt Alantæj æstyr læværdtæ uærdædtæj lasync: Iron aluton,
- (44) Ævzistæj aræst Alæjnag særhtæ, syrz zærin ærdyn, æmæ avd faty. . . . Æmæ avd ursbarcon bæxy.

Alamat

- (45) “Farn uæ Saxary! Næ buc Æmaxsartæ!” Arfæ rakodta, Urysy fsadæn, Ældar Alamat. . . .
- (46) Sæ Urs Fidaræn, jæ arfambyla, avd zyldy’rkodta, jæ xalas bæxyl tyrysadaræg. . . .
- (47) Nyzzarydysty. Toxarty zaræg, uæd Ruxs-Alantæ, Urysy bæsty chæsnag galæstæj. . . .
- (48) Sæ qærn aivyl, bærzond Uælarvmæ. . . . Kiev Saxary niku fequstoj særmatdon zaræg. . . .
- (49) Sæ Urs Fidarmæ, xonync Alanty, sæ’hdaumæ gæsgæ, styr kadimæ. . . . Mstislav!—sæ særhy. . . .
- (50) Jæ raxiz farsæj—Ældar Alamat, jæ galiuæjta, tyrysa dartæ. . . . “Farn uæ fidary” zahta Alamat.
- (51) Fyngæn jæ særhy, Qasaty Bibo, Særmattæj ærvyst, uymæn jæ farsma, Toxar Mstislav.
- (52) Galiuærdygæj—Ruxs-Æxsin Nado—Alon Ambizond . . . uymæj dardtæta, æfsædton adæm. . . .
- (53) Alamat Ældar Nadoy farsmæ. . . . Či bambærstaid uydon cy dzurync . . . sæ card cinæj dzag. . . .
- (54) Bærkad sæ fyngyl. . . . Nomad Uazdžytæ Ændæston adæm . . . syrxxærin tæbæxtæ fyngyl ærttivync.
- (55) Dojny Alamat, jæ zærdæ agury Nærtan Aluton—Iron bægæny . . . æmæ-cæm kæm ua.
- (56) Karz nyuæstæjyn—jæ uyrgtæ sudzync . . . sæ gadžidautæj kærædzifædyl ænænyl-æugæ. . . .
- (57) Fyngæn jæ særhy—Mstislav Padcax. . . . Jæ raxiz farsæj—Ældar Alamat, næ toxar razdzau. . . .
- (58) Jæ galiu farsæj-ta, Ruxs-Axsin Nado. . . .
- (59) Fyndžy alyvars—nomad uazdžitæ. . . .

- (60) Kievy Padcax, cahar næ dardta. . . . Nomad fæsiwæd—uyrdygæsdžytæ, sæ bæston daræsty, sæ darh kurætty, sæ gobpag xudty.
- (61) Ally uazægæn, jæ dyuæ farsy, kæstæriudžytæ, cædtæjæ læuyync . . . s'æhdaumæ gæsgæ.
- (62) Alamat axsaræn Ændæston nyuæstæj, jæ sær razyldi. . . .
- (63) Jæxi uyromyn ku næ færazy. . . . Jæ bakomkommæ ju ævzong ældar—Mstislavæn uydi uj jæ xæræfyr. . . .
- (64) Ænæuag mitæj uazdžyty' fæxy. . . . Uæddyn jæ kardmæ, ma fælæbura. . . . Alamat Ældaryl jæxi nyccavta. . . .
- (65) Uj ku audta, Alamat axsar, uadyn ju cæfæj, jæ kard jæ khuxæj, ju fars akhurda. Jæ dygkag riuhdæj—Ændæston ældar, dzyqmard ku fæci. . . . Dæ fydgul aftæ. . . .
- (66) Jæ tug synqysty Alon-bilonæn. . . . Bauyrædtojjæ. . . . Jæ xæcæn gærstæyn Uyrys ku bajstoj, uæd Æxsin Nadomæ ægad ærkasti. . . . Fælæ ku fedta: tyxxæj,
- (67) Alamat Ældary fidarmæ kænync, uæd cavdurau bazzad jæ midbynaty Alon ældary fidary æxkæyn, jæ særmæ xæssy! Burgalty Nado.
- (68) Rauad ædtæmæ: jæ chæxsanag qælæsæj Alantæm dzury: Sarhtæ uæ Alon bæxtyl! Alon fæsiwæd! Fydbyzyl ærcyd næ padcaxady. . . .
- (69) Cædtæuyt balcmæ, kænætæ toxmæ, toxarty Sagtæ, næ Ruks-Alantæ!
- (70) Uazdžytæm razdæxt. . . . Jæ mojmæ dzury: Ju tug! ju'stæg! Ju mady æxsyræj xast xo! mæ'fsymar Alamatimæ.
- (71) Dæ mitæj æfxærd ærcyd næ Bæstæ, næ Alon adæm.
- (72) Rajdajæm næuægæj, næ uazdžytima næ næ fyng, næ minas. . . .
- (73) Alamat fyngyl mæ razy badgæ, acyran kud ua, nymæj dæ kuryn.
- (74) Rajsom dæ baruy, tærxony uymæn dzyrd raxæssynæn.
- (75) Mstislav æmkhardæj Nadomæ dzury:
- (76) D'æfsymær, Ældar Alamat fidary syntædžy mardau axaudta, æftæ nyosdzyn uy. . . . Mæ bon næu, mæ bon! dzyrd radtyr dæuæn. . . . Uj ardæm Fidæræj æ'baxonymæn. . . .
- (77) Tyzmægæj fæzyld jæ midbynaty Alanty Axsin. . . . Uazdžyty nyuaxta. . . . Jæ uatmæ arast. . . .
- (78) Uazdžytæ næuægæj minas ku kænync. . . . Qældzæg sæ zærdæ. . . . Qudyty bacyd ærmæst Mstislav.
- (79) Maku amælat Alanty bardžytæ, cædtæ sæ balcmæ. . . . Dzag, tugfæj-lauæntæj toxarty toxy. . . .
- (80) Padcaxy karty sæ bæxtyl badgæ, ænqælmæ kæsynchron, sæ buc ældarmæ, Ruks Alamat—mæ.
- (81) Kunicy zonync! kunicy'mbarync à fydbylzæn, Alon toxartæ. . . .
- (82) Avipajdy uæd, Alanty zaræg uazdžytæm qusy padcaxy kærtæj. . . . Rauad Mstislav.
- (83) Æmæ cy dissag. . . . Toxy zard kænync æfsædton adæm. . . . Ædtagon bæsty ænæ æfsærmæ.
- (84) Cyma cy'rcydi . . . aquydy kodta, babæræg kænon, æz mæ binonty . . . Dæ fydgul aftæ. . . .
- (85) Nado jæ fyrty, æmæ jæxi ud, fædæl-dzæx kodta, Alon cyrh kardæj. . . .
- (86) Rajsomæj radzy fidarmæ Mstislav jæxædæg ssyd, æmæ rakodta Alon aldary, Ruks Alamaty . . . Cyma ægomyg uyd, ujau Mstislav, ju dzyrd næ zahta. . . .
- (87) Ægas æxsæv, Alon bardžytæ, sæ Nænton dur-durtæj, sæ toxar bæxtæj næ raxystysty.
- (88) Ældar Alamat basidt ævsadmæ æmæ-cyn zahta: Fydbyls ærcyd, maxæn næ særyl, næ ruks daræstæ, æznadzy tugæj, max æryxdžystæm . . . Mæ'fsædtæ! Fydbylz ærcyd. Maxyl à Bæsty. . . .
- (89) Mæ uarzon Nado, mæ junæg uarzon xo, jæxi . . . jæ sabiy. argævsta kardæj. . . .

- (90) Abonæj falæmæ, adon—næ tudžyn. . . .
- (91) Mærdzygoj arast Alanty bæstæm.
- (92) Saudaræs bontæ ægas adæmæn: nal qusy fændyr, fæsiwæd sæxi n'ælvynync, næ dasync. . . . Qaræg ku kanync næ saudaratæ.
- (93) Næ Ruxs Alanta! a zæxy charyl zmælæg či uyd, sæ Bærzond Tærxony karz dzyrd raxastoj: Abonæj falæmæ Mstislav næ tudžyn.
- (94) Arvystoj Bærzond Tærxonæj sæ minævartta Mstislav saxarmæ: Toxy bydyry! tugæj bafidut! uæ rædydzinad Alanty bæstæn.
- (95) Kievy padcax džixæj bazzadi. . . . Jæ xuzdar bardzytæ aрымbyrdkodta. . . . Tymay-Tærxony bydyrmæ—Alantæm arast. . . .
- (96) Barvysta bonchæxæj jæ minævartty Alantæm Mstislav, æmæ
- (97) cy zahtoj, uj abondærma kadædžy zarync:

Mstislav

- (98) Æznaguyn kunædæn æmæ næuydtæn,
- (99) uad næ adæmy max cæmæn cæhdæm?
- (100) Az uæ xuzdær lægæn, jæ tyxmæ gæsgæ xæcynmæ cædtæ. Či fæuælxizua uymæn ta qalon.
- (101) Uymæn jæ nyxmæ, uycy bon racyd, zarond bæhatyr, næ Iry Dada. . . .
- (102) Mstislavimæ, lægæj—læglmæ. . . . næ Iry Dada.
- (103) Sæ gurtæ bæhnæg sæ dyuajændær. . . .
- (104) Rajsomæj izarmæ fæxæcydysty . . . Ničicæ basast.
- (105) Iry Dadajæn jæ khuxtæ sojy. . . . Jæ gur jæ'znagæn uymæn ud byrynychag.
- (106) Dygkag bon, næuægæj sæ tox kardtæj rajdydtoj.
- (107) Æmæ či zytda Mstislav jæ gurcæj galiuæg kæj uyd.
- (108) Jæ raxiz khuxmæj uæd ævipajdy, jæ galiu khuxmæ, jæ kard aivta. . . .
- (109) Dæ znagyldærma axæm fydbyliz maku ærcæua. . . .
- (110) Iry Dadajæn jæ sær fækhuli. . . .
- (111) Fedtoj Alantæ, kud sajdæj razyld, Mstislav padcax, jæxiul jæ zærdæ ku næual dadta, uæd galiu khuxæj, kud lædžy amardta.
- (112) Næ Nomad Zæronð, Næ Buc Ældar! Dy kæmæn uydta? Dy kæmæn naldæ? Dæ tug rajsynta—næ xæs uy! næ xæs!
- (113) Alanty Bæsty Nyxasy lægtæ sæ dzyrd raxastoj: Basidyn Urysymæ, tugkælæn toxma.
- (114) Uj ku fegusta, Alamat Ældar uæd bar rakurdtæ tærxony lægtæj dzyrdyn kud radtoj. . . .

Alamat Ældar

- (115) Zonut xistærtæ. Tugmondagzinad Alanty bæsta nikudær uydis, stæj næuydzæn:
- (116) Fælæ mænæn ta abon mæxas uy—ju tug næfælæ, dyværtug rajsyn.
- (117) Iunægæj sidyn dyuadæs barægmæ Mstislavy vsadæj.
- (118) Tymay-Tærxony bydyry dyua ævsady kærædzi nyxmæ toxmæ cædtæjæ, sæ tyrysa-timæ. . . .
- (119) Dyuadæs ældary Urysy fsadæj, razmæ racydy ældary sidtmæ.
- (120) Iu uycy bardzytæj urs barcdzyn bæxyl cærgæsau rataxt Alamatyrdæm. . . .
- (121) Ruxs Alan Ældar uycy tymyhæj jæ razmæ fæci, jæ xalas bæxyl.
- (122) Sæ kærðty zællangæj sæ bæxtæ sæ fæstægtyl yslauudysty . . . Uad ævibajdy—sæ bardzydy sæ bucxast bæxtæ dyuardæm axastoj.
- (123) Næugæj Alamat Ældaræn jæ axsar ændæoh, jæ bæx rauaxta. . . .
- (124) Alon-bilon-dyn ærxussyn kodta chæx næul jæ bæx. . . .
- (125) Dæfydgyl aftæ. . . .

- (126) Sæ cyrd bæximæ jæ sarty atyld. . . .
(127) Fæssærræt lasta uæd n'ævzong Ældar æmæ jæ'xsar riuhdæj sær fædyuæ kodta jæ særqæn znagæn.
(128) Disæj, dzixauæj dyuæ æfsady sæ midbynætty ku bazzadysty. . . .
(129) Alanta rajstoj sæ tug Kievæj. . . .
(130) Mstislav jæxædæg uæd acamydta jæ xæræfyrtnæ . . . Bærzon bæxbaræg, burdzalyd ældar, jæ kard ærxasta næ'vzon ældaryl. . . .
(131) Uyrdygmæ, bæxæn, jæ galiufarsmæ, Alamat Ældar ævibpæjd fakhul. . . .
(132) Aznadzy cæfæj sarh fædyuæy, fælæ
(133) Alamat, gænyston sarhæj, lægæn jæ raxiz kux adzængæl lastæ.
(134) Min azy cæræj! Alamat axsar! Jæ tug či ræjsta, Nærton Alajnag!

Kadædžy fæsdzyrd

- (135) Fydæltj-Fydæltæj, ju æhdau zonæm, næ Ruxs Alantæj.
(136) Tug tugæj æxsync. Tug donæj n'æxsync.
(137) Cy fydbylzæn akald uæzdan tug?
(138) Mstislavy qæbul, Nadoj khuxæj . . . mard cæmæn ærcyd?
(139) Arvy Ruxs! Uyr rixi, næ Iry Dada?
(140) Uyrysæn sæxicæj—sæ axsdzyjætæ. . . .
(141) Uycy qudyty bacyd jæxædæg Mstislav Padcax.
(142) Ældar Alamat, Alanty særhy. . . .
(143) Jæ arfambyla—Tærxony lægtæ, bæsty særmættæ—dalæ fæcæuync. . . .
(144) Uyrasy badæn-cæm, dardmæ fæzyndi. . . .
(145) Uyrasy padcax, Uæzdan Mstislav, Alamatimæ æmvænd skodtoj. . . .
(146) Asyræj asyrmæ. max kærædzimæ kud næual cæuæm.
(147) Tudžyn dzinad, max aæxsæn nal is. . . .
(148) Zarync abondær! a Nærton Kadæg!
(149) Næ Iry Dada! Dy kæmæn uydta? Dy kæmæn naldæ?
Kæron.

4. IRY DADA—TRANSLATION²⁴

Introduction

- (1) From our forefathers this wonder-tale, an Alanic legend, has been left to us:
(2-3) How it happened that our heroic Dada was killed in a duel on the field of combat by the crafty hand of a foreign prince.
(4) [refrain] O Iry Dada! O Iry Dada!
(5) O face, bearer of man's body. It is not larger than the palm of the hand.
(6) How to show it to the whole world? O our honor left to us from our forefathers, the Radiant Alans!²⁵
(7) O Iry Dada! O Iry Dada!
(8) How can we forsake our heroic ancient's white mustache? and his beard? and Dada's blood?
(9) Thus conversed the notables at the Ossetian assembly.
(10) O Iry Dada! O Iry Dada!
(11) But how did this fatal event occur in the green prairies of the Alan country?
(12) The strings of the Ossetian lyre²⁶ will tell you this, from the beginning to the end.
(13) O Iry Dada! O Iry Dada!
(14) O our honorable ancient! Our cherished serene leader! For whom didst thou exist?²⁷
For whom didst thou cease to exist?

- (15) Thou wast given a share in the miraculous destiny of the Alans.
- (16) O Iry Dada! O Iry Dada!
- (17) For whom didst thou exist, for whom didst thou cease to exist, our beloved ancient? Grieve, O Alan country!
- (18) From afar shone in the silky meadows thy radiant beard like a snowy avalanche, our Iry Dada,
- (19) When thou wast wont to ride with thy droves of horses, with thy fat cattle, across the Khasara Mountains.
- (20) The Holy Barastyr²⁸ thus spoke to thee: "When thou wantest, come thou to my nether city.
- (21) [I'll give thee] a feather bed for thy old bones, and for thy soul—a golden tower adorned with bright paintings.²⁹
- (22) Silver-maned steeds [will be] sent to thee from heaven; The new moon is thy sharp saber."
- (23) The one who heard these heavenly [words] from Barastyr's [messengers] clad in black is not afraid [of the realm] of the dead.
- (24) [And indeed Iry Dada] in his earthly life did not know cowardice; therefore he did not spare his soul or his body.
- (25) This tale will show how he was killed by a hostile hand, by Mstislav's sword.
- (26) Indeed, the wide prairies from the Land of the Warm Sun³⁰ to [the lands of] the Sunset belonged to the Alans from time immemorial.
- (27) Many graves of our kin have been left there. And then the Antes established themselves there.³¹
- (28) Their red-haired chieftain was named Mstislav,³² a brave warrior, a noble horseman.

The Envoys (Matchmakers)

- (29) The Antes decided to enter in kinship with the Alans and sent matchmakers for their padishah.
- (30) [They said]: "If you value our kinship, let us come to an agreement today, o men of the council!
- (31) According to your custom we seek in marriage your girl for our cherished prince, o honored Alans.
- (32) If we unite, there will be no people on earth stronger than we; you know this well.
- (33) The most beautiful girl in the country of the Alans, wonderfully handsome, a picture painted by Sun, Nado of the Burgalty clan,
- (34) by chance has not yet been engaged. Her slender waist, her heroic stature, her look, her noble gait,
- (35) her golden braid, falling back to her heels; and [gracefulness in] her dances and roundeleys—
- (36) who could be more harmonious?" "Who woos her?" "The prince of the Antes." "Let this be for thy happiness.
- (37) Where else couldst thou obtain such a fortune?" The Alan beauty became thy consort.
[Mstislav goes to Kiev after the wedding].
- (38) Then Mstislav went to the city of Kiev, to the country of his birth, with joyful songs. There is now the Alanic *tamga* on his banner.³³
- (39) The year did not pass after the wedding before one day a son was born to Mstislav by Nado.
- (40) Lo! an Antian horseman, a messenger of good news, alighted from his horse in the yard of the Burgalty and gesticulated as best he could.

- (41) When the Alans understood him, in their delight they showered him with gifts.
- (42) The Antian horseman does not speak the [Alanic] language; he explains by gestures. Neither does he understand [the Alanic language].³⁴
- (43) To the newborn prince they carry grand gifts from all of the Alans: black beer,
- (44) Silver inlaid Alanic saddles, a golden bow and seven arrows, and seven white-maned horses.

Alamat

- (45) "Peace to your city, our noble comrades-in-valor!" Thus Prince Alamat greeted the Russian warriors.³⁵
- (46) The Alan standard-bearer on a roan horse³⁶ circled the White Castle seven times.³⁷
- (47) And then in the land of the Russians the Radiant Alans sang their war song starting in treble.³⁸
- (48) The chorus' refrain rose high to the sky. They never before heard in the City of Kiev the Sarmatian song.
- (49) [The Russians] invite the Alans into the White Castle, according to the custom of the land, with great honors. Mstislav leads the way.
- (50) Prince Alamat is on his right side, and the standard bearers, on the left. "Peace to your castle!" said Alamat.
- (51) [In the banquet hall] Qasaty Bibo, representative of the Council,³⁹ is at the head of the table, and near him the valiant Mstislav;
- (52) And on the left, the radiant lady, Nado, the Alan wonder, and farther away, the warriors.
- (53) Prince Alamat [is seated] close to Nado. Who could know what they are talking about. Their life is full of joy.
- (54) The viands are on the table. The honorable guests and the Antes [sit together]. The golden dishes glitter on the table.
- (55) Alamat is thirsty, he wants to drink the brew of the Narts—the black beer.
- (56) [Instead] they burn his kidneys with hard drinks, toasting him with no interruption.
- (57) The padishah Mstislav⁴⁰ is at the head of the table, and on his right side is Prince Alamat, our leading warrior;
- (58) On the right of him the radiant lady Nado;
- (59) And the noble guests around the table.
- (60) The padishah of Kiev kept no slaves. Noblemen served at the table in the garments of their country, in their long caftans and high pointed caps.
- (61) At the two sides of each guest two noblemen [stood] ready to wait upon him, according to the custom of the land.
- (62) The hero Alamat's head swam because of the Antian drinks.
- (63) He cannot restrain himself any more. Opposite him [at the table] sat a young prince, son of Mstislav's sister.
- (64) By his dissolute manners he offends the guests. But lo! Has he not unsheathed his sword? Is he not going to strike Alamat?
- (65) When the hero Alamat saw this, he by one stroke knocked the prince's sword from his hand to the side. By Alamat's second stroke the Antian prince is killed on the spot. To thy enemy—the deserved fate!
- (66) The enemy's blood boiled in Alamat. They seized him. But when the Russians took away Alamat's war weapon, Lady Nado deemed this an offense. When she saw that they took Alamat's weapon by force,

- (67) [and that] they led the Alan prince to be imprisoned in the castle, she considered it a disgrace to Nado of the Burgalty clan.
- (68) She rushed to the yard and shouted to the Alans in shrill voice; "Saddle your Alanic horses! A misfortune occurred in our realm.
- (69) Prepare yourselves for a campaign, for battle, for war, o warriors deer, o radiant Alans!"
- (70) [Then] she returned to the guests and thus spoke to her husband: "[I am] Alamat's full sister—of one blood, of one bone, fed with the same breast's milk.
- (71) By thy rude punishment [of him] my land and our Alanic people have been offended.
- (72) Let us start anew with our guests our dinner, our banquet.
- (73) Let Alamat sit near me at the table, this I ask thee.
- (74) Tomorrow—thy right to sentence him at the court."
- (75-76) The saddened Mstislav says to Nado: "Thy brother Alamat is in the castle, he lies in bed as if he were dead; he is drunk. I am not able to invite him here."
- (77) In a fit of anger the Alan lady whirled around, left the guests and went to her room.
- (78) The guests banquet anew; gay are their hearts. Mstislav alone is in deep anxiety.
- (79) There is no death for the Alan horsemen ready for a campaign. They are full of waves of blood from their war battles.
- (80) In the padishah's yard, mounted, they wait for their cherished prince, the radiant Alamat.
- (81) The Alan warriors know nothing, understand nothing about the misfortune.
- (82) All of a sudden the guests [in the banquet hall] hear the Alanic song from the padishah's yard. Mstislav rushed out.
- (83) What wonder. The warriors sing their war song in the land of the Antes without constraint.
- (84) "What happened?" thought [Mstislav]. "Let me call on my family. This song is meant for an enemy."
- (85) With the sharp Alanic dagger⁴¹ Nado sent her son and herself to the netherworld.
- (86) Early next morning Mstislav went to the castle and led out the Alanic prince, the radiant Alamat. Mstislav himself uttered no word.
- (87) Through the whole night the Alan horsemen did not alight from their Nartian steeds, their war horses.
- (88) Prince Alamat thus addressed the warriors: "A misfortune has fallen on our heads. To avenge shame, let us dip our radiant garments in the enemy's blood, o our warriors! A misfortune has fallen upon us.
- (89) My beloved Nado, my only beloved sister, slew herself and her boy with the dagger of the braves.
- (90) From this day that people are our blood enemies."
- (91) The funeral train proceeded to the Alanic country.
- (92) The whole people donned black garments; no lyre playing is heard, the people do not cut their hair, nor shave. Black-clothed women weepers mourn the dead.
- (93) "O our radiant Alans! Wherever you happen to be on the earth's crust, the Supreme Council made its decision: From this day Mstislav is our blood enemy."
- (94) The wise men of the Supreme Council sent their emissaries to Mstislav [with this message]: "You have to pay the Alan country in blood on the battlefield for your misdeed."
- (95) The Kiev padishah was stunned. He gathered his choice horsemen in the Tyma-Tærxon⁴² plain and went against the Alans.

- (96) At dawn Mstislav sent his emissaries to the Alans.
(97) What they said, the tale reciters still sing today.

Mstislav

- (98) "I am not your enemy and never was.
(99) Why then should we slaughter our people?
(100) I am ready to wrestle with your best man and match his strength."
(101) Against him at that day came out the ancient *bæhatyr*,⁴³ our Iry Dada,
(102) To combat with Mstislav, man to man, our Iry Dada.
(103) The torsos of both are naked.
(104) From morning to evening they wrestled. Neither was vanquished.
(105) Iry Dada's hands are covered with grease and his adversary's body is slippery.⁴⁴
(106) The next day they began their combat with swords.
(107) But who knew that Mstislav was from his birth a left-handed man?
(108) Suddenly he shifted his sword from his right hand to his left.
(109) Not even to your enemy could you wish such a misfortune.
(110) Iry Dada's head drooped.
(111) The Alans saw what deceit the padishah Mstislav contrived when he did not trust his strength any more, how he then killed the man by a left-handed stroke.
(112) O our honorable ancient! Our cherished radiant prince! For whom didst thou exist, for whom didst thou cease to exist? Our duty is to avenge thy blood.
(113) The assembly of the Alan country made its decision: to challenge the Russians for a bloody battle.
(114) When Prince Alamat knew of it, he asked to be allowed to speak before the council.

Prince Alamat

- (115) "Know ye, O elders. The nation of the Alans never was bloodthirsty and never will be.
(116) But today my duty is to take not only [the price of] his [Iry Dada's] blood, but double blood.
(117) Alone I challenge twelve horsemen from Mstislav's army."
(118) In the plain of Tyma-Tærxon two armies, one facing the other with their banners, are ready for war.
(119) Twelve princes of the Russian army ride forward to answer Prince [Alamat's] challenge.
(120) One of (Mstislav's) horsemen on a white-maned horse flew like an eagle against Alamat.
(121) The radiant Alanic prince suddenly appeared in front of him on a roan horse.
(122) [Excited by] the clinking of their swords, their horses pranced and all of a sudden carried the riders away in two opposite directions.
(123) Anew prince Alamat and his brave adversary gave rein to their horses.
(124) The Alan suddenly hurled down his horse on the green turf.
(125) To thy enemy—the deserved fate!
(126) [The Russian] on his swift horse stumbled over [Alamat's horse].
(127) The youthful prince then sprang to his feet and with a bold stroke [of his sword] cut in two the head of the foolish foe.
(128) Amazed and stunned the two armies stood where they were.
(129) The Alans took the blood [due them] from the Kievans.
(130) Mstislav then made a sign to his nephew. The tall horseman, a blond prince, [rushed forward] and lifted his sword over the young Prince's [head].

- (131) Instantly Prince Alamat hid from his saddle down behind the left side of his horse.
 (132) By the enemy's stroke the saddle is cut in two.
 (133) Alamat then leaped back into the halved saddle and cut his adversary's right hand.
 (134) Live for thousands of years, brave Alamat, [thou] who took the blood due thee, o Nart Alan!

Epilogue of the Tale

- (135) From our forefathers, our Radiant Alans, we know one custom:
 (136) Blood is washed off by blood. Blood cannot be washed off by water.
 (137) Why did such misfortune occur that noble blood was shed?
 (138) Why should Mstislav's boy have been killed by Nado's hand?
 (139) And why [was] our heavenly radiant Iry Dada [killed]?
 (140) And why [were] the very best of the Russians [killed]?
 (141) The padishah Mstislav immersed himself in these thoughts.
 (142) [Behold!] There they go, down in the plain: Prince Alamat at the head of the Alans.
 (143) Around him are the members of the council, the wise men of the land.
 (144) The Russian camp is already seen [ahead of them].
 (145) The Russian padishah, the noble Mstislav, made an agreement with Alamat
 (146) That never for centuries to come we [the two peoples] should go against one another.
 (147) There is no blood feud between us any more.
 (148) And even today they sing [among us] this Nartian tale.
 (149) O our Iry Dada! For whom didst thou exist, for whom didst thou cease to exist?

The End.

NOTES

¹ S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, ed. and trans. *The Russian Primary Chronicle, Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 134. For the Russian original see V. P. Adrianova-Peretts, ed. *Povest' Vremennykh Let* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950), I, 99. The Hypatian text contains the same story, *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisev* (3rd ed., 1923), II, Fasc. 1, Cols. 132-133.

² See Adrianova-Peretts, II, p. 88.

³ S. H. Cross's translation, "La Geste du Prince Igor," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, VIII (1945-1947), 151. It should be noted that Boyan could have known Mstislav personally in his youth. Mstislav died in 1036. We know that Boyan was still living in 1079 when Prince Roman Svyatoslavich was killed by the Polovtsy. Boyan could have composed his poem on Roman in 1079 or in 1080. The titles of Boyan's three poems mentioned in the *Slovo* enable us hypothetically to reconstruct his career. He apparently stayed first at Mstislav's court in Chernigov, then after Mstislav's death went to Yaroslav in Kiev, and after the latter's death was patronized by Svyatoslav of Chernigov. Boyan's poem on Svyatoslav's son Roman was apparently his last major work, and he probably was an old man at the time of Roman's death. If Boyan was around 80 in 1079, he could have been, at the age of about 20, a witness of Mstislav's duel with Rededya. (I cannot accept Tikhomirov's suggestion that Boyan was the court poet of Prince Oleg Svyatoslavich [d. 1115]; see M. N. Tikhomirov, "Boyan i Troyanova zemlya," *Slovo o Polku Igoreve*, ed. V. P. Adrianova-Peretts [Moscow-Leningrad, 1950], p. 177.)

⁴ *Die Sagen und Lieder des Tscherkessen-Volks*, gesammelt vom Kabardiner Schora-Bekmursin Nogmow, bearbeitet von Adolf Bergé (Leipzig, 1866). The Russian edition is inaccessible to me.

⁵ N. S. Trubetskoy, "Rededya na Kavkaze," *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* (1911), No. 1-2, 229-238.

⁶ *Hudud al-Alam*, trans. and expl. by V. F. Minorsky, "J. W. Gibb Memorial" Series, N. S., XI (London, 1937), 445. In the extant ms. of Ibn-Rusta, *Dkhhs-As*; Minorsky's emendation, *Rukhs-As*.

⁷ *Hudud al-Alam*, p. 446.

⁸ *Hudud al-Alam*, p. 161.

⁹ See *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 145.

¹⁰ See G. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (New Haven, 1948), pp. 161-162.

¹¹ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 136.

¹² V. F. Minorsky, "Rus' v Zakavkaz'e," *Izvestiya na Instituta za Bulgarska Istoriya*, V (1954), 378-380.

¹³ *PSRL*, II (St. Petersburg, 1843), 2, 7, 8. Cf. V. F. Miller, *Osetinskie etyudy*, III (Moscow, 1887), 66-68. According to Miller, the name of the town recorded in the Russian chronicles as Sugrov should be read Syrx-Qæu, which means "Red Town" in Ossetian.

¹⁴ See N. de Baumgarten, "Généalogies et mariages occidentaux des rurikides russes du X-e au XIII-e siècle," *Orientalia Christiana*, IX, No. 35 (Roma, 1927), 70.

¹⁵ On Ossetian folklore see V. F. Miller (above, n. 13); V. I. Abaev, *Osetinskiy yazyk i folklor*, I (Moscow and Leningrad, 1949); H. Field, "Contributions to the Anthropology of the Caucasus," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, XLVIII, No. 1 (1953), 26-34. (Reviewed by W. E. D. Allen, *JRCAS* [July-October, 1954] 271-272.)

¹⁶ See V. Dynnik, trans. *Skazaniya o Nartakh* (Moscow, 1944) and *Nartskie Skazaniya* (Leningrad, 1949); G. Dumézil, *Légendes sur les Nartes* (Paris, 1930).

¹⁷ Field (as in n. 15), p. 33.

¹⁸ *PSRL*, II, 111-116; M. D. Priselkov, ed. *Troitskaya Letopis'* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950), pp. 253-255.

¹⁹ In Ossetian, *ambal* means "friend," "companion."

²⁰ P. G. Butkov in his article "O brakakh knyazey Russkikh s Gruzinkami i Yasynyami v XII veke," *Severnyi Arkhiv*, XIII (1825), 326-327, says that Prince Andrey's Alanic wife participated, together with Anbal, in the assassination of Andrey, and that afterwards she was drowned in Lake Kleshchin by the order of Andrey's brother Vsevolod. Butkov refers to V. N. Tatishchev's *Istoriya Rossiyskaya*, III, 216, 495, and adds that Tatishchev obtained this information from Eropkin. Tatishchev's Vol. III is not accessible to me. In Vol. I, Part 1 of his *I.R.* (which I have at hand) Tatishchev mentions (p. 64) "the architect Eropkin," together with A. P. Volynsky, among the connoisseurs of Russian history to whom he showed his collection of chronicles and who supplied him with additional information. (P. M. Eropkin was executed simultaneously with Volynsky in 1740). It is possible that Eropkin had at his disposal a record of some old tradition concerning Andrey's Alanic wife. However, Eropkin's communication (or his source) cannot be considered entirely creditable in detail. For example, Vsevolod did not seize power in Suzdalia until about a year after Andrey's death and thus hardly would have been in position to execute Andrey's Alanic consort. On the basis of both the Kievan and the Suzdalian chronicles we may be sure that the Alanic princess had died before Andrey (or had left him). At the same time, disregarding inaccuracy in detail, we may conclude from Eropkin's story that the Alanic princess was in one way or another connected with Anbal's conspiracy against Andrey. I see in Eropkin's story an indirect confirmation of my surmise that Anbal's motive was that of revenge (avenging an earlier offense on the part of Andrey against the Alanic princess' honor).

²¹ Alanic horse (*Alajmag bax*). Other similar terms: Alanic racehorse (*Alajmag duhon*); Alanic stallion (*Alajmag uys*); Alanic mare (*Alajmag efs*). In a letter of 28 March 1955, Dzambulatsky explained that the "Alanic horses" were an ancient breed and were highly valued in the Mozdok steppes. Before 1917 they were bred in the Eisk region, east of the Sea of Azov. They were exterminated during the years of the revolutionary turmoil after 1917. Dzambulatsky describes these horses as tall, lean, and "swift as a hurricane." Some of them were with a crook in the nose (in Russian: *gorbonosye*), with mane descending to the ground (in Russian: *griva do zemli*). They were roan (*xalas*) color (in Russian: *čalyj*), with black mane and tail, and a black stripe on the back from mane to tail.

²² From a letter to Vernadsky (in Russian), February, 1955.

²³ The verses of the tale—Ossetian text by Dzambulatsky, translation by Vernadsky—have been numbered for convenience.

²⁴ Although Dzambulatsky supplied a word-for-word Russian translation, Vernadsky did not depend on it mechanically but worked through the Ossetian text and in some cases translated directly from the Ossetian or requested additional explanations.

²⁵ The 'Radiant Alans,' *Ruxs-Alan*.

²⁶ The 'Ossetian lyre,' *ǰəndyr*. The present day *ǰəndyr* resembles the violin. The *ǰəndyr* of old had twelve strings and may be likened to a harp or a lyre. See *Nartskije Skazaniya*, p. 28; *Skazaniya o Nartakh*, p. 79.

²⁷ 'For whom didst thou exist?' Meaning: for us (Ossetians).

²⁸ Barastyr in Ossetian mythology is the lord of all the dead. The soul is assigned by him to its place either in Hell (*Zyndon*) or in Paradise (*Dzanæt*). See Field, p. 30.

²⁹ 'A golden tower adorned with bright paintings.' This may be a remembrance of the old palaces adorned with frescoes in bright colors like those discovered by S. P. Tolstov's expedition in Khorezm. See his *Po sledam drevne-khorezmijskoj tsivilizatsii* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1948), Figs. 46-52.

³⁰ 'From the Land of the Warm Sun,' *Qarym-Xur Bəstəj*. Dzambulāt Dzanty interprets this descriptive name as the Crimea, deriving the latter from the word *Qarym* 'warm.' In my opinion, Khorezm is meant here (Khoresm, i.e., *Xvar-zem* or *Xur-zem* 'the land of the Sun').

³¹ 'The Antes,' *ædtagon adæmtæ*, literally 'the outer people.' The name 'Antes' derives from the Alanic (Ossetian) word *ændæ* 'out,' 'outside' (Digor dialect), or *ædtæ* (Iron dialect). Under it the 'outer' or peripheral tribes of the Alans and of the tribes originally controlled by them were known in the late Roman and the early Byzantine periods, especially the Eastern Slavs. See G. Vernadsky, "A Note on the Name Antes," *JAOS*, LXXIII (1953), 192.

³² 'Red-haired' Mstislav, *burxil*. In the *Povest'*, p. 101 of the old Russian text (Adrianova-Peretts' ed.), it is said that Mstislav was *chermen litsem* 'red-faced' in Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor's translation, p. 136.

³³ The 'Alanic *tamga*.' *Tamga* 'clan emblem,' in Ossetian *damgæ* or *damyhæ*. Dzambulāt Dzanty interprets *damyhæ* as *dæ myg* 'thy sperm,' i.e. 'thy flesh.' Dzambulāt Dzanty saw the *tamga* of the Burgalty clan (to which Nado belonged) around 1910. It is two-pronged and made of bronze. As a military emblem the *tamga* was fastened on the top of the standard. A three-pronged *tamga* (trident) of this sort was found in the Nalchik region in the North Caucasian area. Mstislav's *tamga*, like that of his father, Vladimir the Saint, had the form of the trident; it is represented on a bow-case found in Tmutorokan; see B. A. Rybakov, "Znaki sobstvennosti v knyazheskom khozyaystve Kievskoy Rusi," *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya*, VI (1940), 242, Figs. 41 and 42.

³⁴ This verse is obviously the reciter's remark intended to explain to his listeners the meaning of the two preceding verses.

³⁵ 'Russian,' *Urysy*.

³⁶ 'Roan' for *xalas* (čalyj), literally 'hoarfrost' in color. See also n. 21 above. I am indebted to Col. Paul Rodziansko, through the courtesy of W. E. D. Allen, author of *The Ukraine and History of the Georgian People*, for confirmation of the translation 'roan' for *čalyj*.

³⁷ 'White Castle,' *Urs Fidar*. Possibly Belgorod, in the Kiev region.

³⁸ According to Dzambulāt Dzanty, even now the Ossetian songs are started in treble and then continued in chorus (in Russian: *nachinayut diskanty, potom idët khor*).

³⁹ 'Representative of the Council': in the Ossetian text, *sərmattəj ærvyst*. (Cf. Verse 143, *bəsty sərmattæ*.) *Sərmæt*, literally 'chief of deliberation,' or 'chief deliberator,' from *sər* 'head,' 'chief,' and *mæt* 'thought,' i.e., member of the Council of notables. Cf. in Old Russian *bojare dumajūšcie* 'the deliberating boyars,' i.e., members of the Duma. Council: *tərxon*. *Tərxon* in modern Ossetian means 'court trial,' 'court decision,' and 'deliberation.' The original connotation is 'deliberation.' Thus the term *tərxon* corresponds to the Old Russian *duma* (as in 'Boyar Duma').

⁴⁰ The 'padishah Mstislav,' *padcax*. In my opinion the term 'padishah,' as used in this tale, is the Ossetian translation of the title 'Kagan.' It is known that Yaroslav the Wise had that title in the later part of his reign, after Mstislav's death. Presumably, Mstislav had it before.

⁴¹ 'Dagger.' In the Ossetian text, *ħard*, which means 'sword' and also 'knife.'

⁴² *Tyma-Tərxon*. In Russian, 'Tmutorokan'. 'T'ma' in old Russian means 'myriad,' specifically 'military unit 10,000 strong' (in Mongol, *tūmen*). In Ossetian there is an expression *tymy-tyma* 'all of the kind,' 'a great multitude'; cf. in Russian *t'ma t'mushchaya*. On the connotations of the Ossetian *tərxon*, see n. 39. *Tərxan*, in Turkish or Mongol, means 'a chieftain,' 'a commander,' and also has the connotation of 'a man [landowner] granted immunity from taxes.' In 16th cen-

ture Russian, *tarkhan* was used in the sense of 'immunity from taxes.' As the name of a city, T'ma-Tarxan (Tmutorokan') is to be explained as 'the headquarters of the commander of a myriad'; cf. such names as Astrakhan (As-Tarxan) and Tyumen' [Tümen]). Cf. my article, "Toxar, T'ma, T'mutorokan," forthcoming in the volume *For Roman Jakobson*.

⁴³ *Bəhatyr*, cf. the Russian *bogatyr*'.

⁴⁴ The implication is that Mstislav, preparing himself for the wrestling match, rubbed his torso with grease (pig's fat?).

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BALLADIC *BYLINY* RECORDED IN THE SOUTH LADOGA BASIN

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SINCE Vsevolod Miller's paper of 1894 on the geographical spread and limits of Russian oral epic tradition, folklorists have repeatedly broached this subject.¹ In European Russia of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it is the North that has proved to be the main land of the *byliny*, in particular the Olonets and the Archangel provinces, except for the southern part of the Shenkursk district. Thus, within the European region of the Russian language, the territory of living rhapsodic tradition coincides with the area of two closely cognate dialectal varieties of North Russian, namely the Archangel (or Pomorian) and the Olonets group, whereas there is no thorough epic tradition either in the South-Russian domain or in the Western (Novgorodian), Eastern (Vologda Vyatka), and Southern (Vladimir Volga land) dialects of North Russian. Since the Archangel and Olonets dialects point to an old Novgorodian colonization, any speculations about modern social and cultural conditions responsible for the preservation of *byliny* in the Archangel and Olonets area appear futile and groundless. But the search for epic residues at the margins of the so-called "Iceland of Russian epos" becomes a tempting task.

While the province of Olonets is still the richest in epic texts, the records of *byliny* are very scarce in the southern vicinity of this province. According to the survey of B. and J. Sokolov,² "in the Novgorod province there are only scanty survivals of *byliny*, and no professional narrators." In the 1830's one fragmentary remnant was found in the city of Novgorod, and another in the Valdai district, and in 1909 a few *byliny* were noted by the brothers Sokolov in the Kirillov district. In 1871 Hilferding recorded some epic fragments in the Novaja Ladoga district of St. Petersburg province.³

In the area of a rich epic tradition both heroic and balladic *byliny* are widespread. The poetic forms of these two genres present considerable similarities, but the balladic *byliny* are more familiar to female than to male narrators, although many records of such ballads were made from the outstanding men performers of the heroic repertory. It is noteworthy that some balladic *byliny* show a wider diffusion than the heroic *byliny*.⁴

Two typical balladic *byliny*—one about the maiden Domna, who perished for having mocked the prince Dimitrij, and the other about Princess Katerina, tortured to death by the mother of her absent husband, Prince Mixajlo—are particularly popular in the Pinega section of the Archangel area, but a fragment of the ballad on Dimitrij and Domna was recorded in the province of Novgorod and one variant in the Syzran district of Simbirsk province.⁵ The ballad on Mixajlo and Katerina was found not only in the Valdai district of the Novgorod province and in the Novaja Ladoga dis-

trict of St. Petersburg province, but occurs as far away as in the provinces of Vologda and Perm, Tula and Orel.⁶

The decline of the past century showed an enthusiastic development of field work in Russian folklore. In the 1890's an instructor of Russian in the Teachers Seminary at Gatchina near Petersburg taught his pupils to use their vacations to record folksongs, tales, proverbs, and customs in their home villages, and this happy initiative brought into being a rich, instructive collection of folklore from the provinces of Petersburg, Novgorod and Pskov, which belongs at present to the Houghton Library of Harvard University. Both ballads figure in the Gatchina collection: on 15 July 1896, a fragmentary record of the *bylina* about Dimitrij and Domna was made by P. Baškirov from a peasant woman, Domna Vlas'eva, in the village Astrači, Tikhvin district, Novgorod province, and on 3 January 1896, in the Mixajlovskaja volost, Novaja Ladoga district, St. Petersburg province, the ballad on Mixajlo and Katerina was written down by N. Kudrjašov. These two balladic *byliny*, recorded in the South Ladoga basin, are not only geographically close to the great epic region of the Onega Lake, but display striking formal correspondences with the balladic *byliny* as they are shaped and chanted where the epic tradition is thoroughly inveterated.

In transliterating the texts, we have reproduced both their conventional Russian spelling and the few hints as to the dialect of the narrators:

Prince Dimitrij and Domna

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Kak pošel Mitrij ko zautreni,
A Vasil'evič ko sobornija,
Kak uviděla ego krasna Domna,
Krasna Domna Aleksandrovna.</p> <p>5. A ne èto li, matuška, Mitrij knjaz',
A ne èto-l', gosudarynja, Vasil'evič?
A skazali pro Mitrija, čto Mitrij knjaz'
Iz tonka vysok, iz běla rumjan.
Ažno Mitrij knjaz' i sutul gorbat,</p> <p>10. [I sutul gorbat,] na pered pokljap.
Čto-l' skazali pro Mitrija,
Čto u Mitrija volosy šelkovye,
Čto-l' nezděšnjago šelku—èstljanskago.
A u Mitrija knjazja volosy eževye,</p> <p>15. Čto-l' ne zděšnjago eža—zaonežskago,
I rjaboe lico i kosye glaza,
I v potu lico ne učesannoe. . . .
Posylaet Vasil'evič svoego posla;
Pervyj posol so dvora ne ššel,</p> <p>20. A vtoroj to posol vo terem vzošel.
Kak zovet tebja mila pódružka,
Krasna Nastas'ja Vasil'evna.
U nej Mitrija bratca doma net,
A Vasil'eviča ne slučilosja</p> <p>25. Čto-l' na groznoj službě gosudarevoj.
Ugovarivala Domnu rodna matuška:</p> | <p>—Ne xodi, ne xodi, moe ditjatko,
Ne xodi, ne xodi, moe miloe. . . .
Ja ne dolgo spala, da mnogo viděla,</p> <p>30. Ne xorošij son mně prividělsja,
Budto tvoj žemčug ves' razsypalsja,
Už ja ves' žemčug sobrala,
Liš' odnu žemčuženku ne našla.
—Ty rodimaja moja matuška.</p> <p>35. Ty sama spala—sebě viděla. . . .
—Ty beri sebě plat'e trojakoe:
Oдно plat'e vsedennoe, drugoe voskres-
noe,
Tret'e plat'e podvěnečnoe. . . .
Kak podxodit Domna ko širokomu
dvoru,</p> <p>40. Posered' dvora ogni gorjat,
Pokraj dvora strěl'ba, pal'ba;
Sam Mitrij knjaz' u kryl'ca stoit.
Kak vstrěčaet Domnu mila podružka:
—Ty idi, idi, gost'ja spěsivaja,</p> <p>45. Ty idi, idi, gost'ja lomlivaja,
Ne sutulaja, ne gorbataja,
Na pered gost'ja ne pokljapaja,
U krasnoj Domny Aleksandrovny
Skory nožen'ki podlomilisja,</p> <p>50. Běly ručen'ki opustilisja. . . .</p> |
|---|--|

- Što počal knjaz' Mixajlo,
 Što vo put' dal'nju dorožku,
 Što vo carskiju službu.
 Provožajut njan'ki, mamki
5. S mododoj ženoj-knjainěj,
 Oj, knjainěj Katerinoj.
 Što nakazyval Mixajlo
 Svoěj matušķě rodimoj:
 "Už ty matušķa moja rodima!
10. Ne pokin' ženu moju knjainju,
 Što knjainju Katerinu
 Město dočeri svoej rodnyja."
 —"Už vy, njan'ki moi mamki!
 Natopitě žarku banju,
15. Nakalitě gorjuč-kamen',
 Položitě na bělyja grudi."
 Ona pervoj raz skričala—
 Bujny větry potjanuli,
 A vtoroēt raz skričala—
20. S cerkovej glavý poššibalo;
 Ona tretej raz skričala—
- Pod Mixajloj kon' potnulsja.
 Mixailo ispugalsja,
 So puti-dorožki voročalsja.
25. —"Vidno doma nezdorovy:
 Ljubo njan'ki, ili mamki,
 Moloda žena knjainja,
 Što knjainja—Katerina."
 Po d"ězžaju blisko k domu,
30. Što stričajut njan'ki, mamki
 Bez molodoj ženy da knjaini.
 —"Už vy, njan'ki moi mamki,
 Gdě žena moja knjainja,
 Što knjainja—Katerina?"
35. —"V zelenom sadu guljala,
 Sladko višen'ě ona sbirala."
 —"Už vy, njan'ki moi mamki!
 Vy skažitě Bož'ju pravdu:
 Gdě žena moja knjainja,
40. Što knjainja—Katerina?"
 —"Vo syroj zemľě ona zaryta,
 V těsovom grobu zakryta."

NOTES

¹ Besides Y. (=J.) Sokolov, *Russian Folklore* (New York, 1950), 295 ff., see, e.g., M. Speranskij, *Russkaja ustnaja slovesnost'* (Moscow, 1917), 181 ff.; A. Skaftymov, *Poetika i genezis bylin* (Saratov, 1924) 132 ff.; R. Trautmann, *Die Volksdichtung der Grossrussen* (Heidelberg, 1935), I, 3 ff.; A. Astaxova, *Byliny severa* (Leningrad, 1938), I, 37 ff.; V. Propp, *Russkij geroičeskij èpos* (Leningrad, 1955), 492 ff.

² B. and J. Sokolov, *Skazki i pesni Belozerskogo kraja* (Moscow, 1915), LXXXVIII ff.

³ A. Hilferding, "Pelec bylin v Peterburgskoj gubernii," *Russkaja starina*, IV (1871), 451 ff.

⁴ See A. Astaxova, *Byliny severa*, I (Leningrad, 1938), 618 f., and II (Leningrad, 1951), 717 f., 777 f.

⁵ A. Sobolevskij, *Velikoruskie narodnye pesni* (Petersburg, 1895), I, Nos. 173, 174.

⁶ Sobolevskij, Nos. 60-68. Cf. I. Ždanov, "Pesni o knjaze Mixaille," *Russkij bylevoj èpos* (Petersburg, 1895), 524 ff.

DOSTOEVSKIJ'S USE OF RUSSIAN FOLKLORE

BY GEORGE GIBIAN

THE folktales of Russia form one of the most extensive bodies of popular literature that has been preserved. In a country where the life of the spirit was for a long time largely in the hands of the church and where secular influences of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment came late or not at all, the folk literature provided a greatly needed medium for the independent self-expression of the people's imagination. It is no wonder that it was a cherished source for the Russian writers of the nineteenth century.

In the works of Dostoevskij, regarded by many as the author most expressive of the depths of the Russian sensibility, we find more or less accurate reproductions of popular songs, theatrical performances, tales, and legends.¹ But more important than incorporations of direct borrowings are the many points of similarity between Dostoevskij's work and the conventions and spirit of Russian folklore. We cannot know all his contacts with it, but some of his sources have been recorded in his brother's memoirs and in his own writings. When he was a small boy in Moscow, the family had wet-nurses who continued to come to the house even after their employment had ended, and spend hours during their visits telling the children the stories of Alësha Popovich, the Firebird, Bluebeard, and others.² Andrej Dostoevskij also mentions having discussed with Fëdor the merits of the narrations of the two former nurses.

There were many books of fairy tales in the Dostoevskijs' house as well as picture broadsheets (*lubochnye skazki*) of such traditional legends as Eruslan Lazarevich and Prince Bova, and as late as the end of the forties, when Dostoevskij had begun writing, he favored Polevoj's idea of making a commercial venture of writing and publishing such *lubochnye* sheets.³ Dostoevskij may also have heard fairy tales from peasants during his summer vacations in the country and later among the convicts in Siberia. At any rate the popular play in *The House of the Dead* reveals his newly acquired knowledge of folklore.

Between 1855 and 1864 the folktale collections of Afanas'ev, the Grimm of Russia, were published and attracted the attention of all Russians interested in their national traditions. This pioneer collection of some six hundred and forty stories is still one of the main sources of the Russian folktale.⁴ It is probable that Dostoevskij read some of the tales and legends collected by Afanas'ev when they were published. In the introduction to the 1859 edition of his collection of legends, Afanas'ev wrote: "The people . . . takes for its narrative compositions the subject matter of the traditions of its past and puts into it the faith and moral convictions of this or that particular stage of its development."⁵ Dostoevskij, who believed that the Russian people rather than the

rationalistic Westerners held the wisest and most Christian beliefs, and who cherished his connections with his country, was likely to turn to the folktale as a repository of the folk traditions which he admired. In such characters as the peasant Marej he showed his faith in the common peasant, who is able to understand a child and to comfort it with maternal tenderness. A remark in *The Diary of a Writer* shows his awareness of the importance of oral popular literature. Dostoevskij's primary interest was of course in the spirituality of the saints' lives, but what is remarkable is his awareness of their folk basis and his dwelling on their popular transmission:

The Lives of the Saints are very widely known in all of Russia. . . . There are very many men and women story-tellers who narrate stories from the Lives of the Saints. They do so very beautifully, accurately, without adding one word of their own, and people listen to them. I myself as a child heard such stories told even before I could read. Later I heard these stories told in prisons, among criminals, and the criminals listened to them and sighed. These stories are not passed on through books, they are learned by heart. (II, 803)⁶

In speaking of Pushkin, Dostoevskij emphasized the necessity of staying close to national traditions: "Is there not indeed a chemical union between a man's spirit and his native land, so that he cannot tear himself away from it for anything—and even if he should tear himself away, he will always return;"⁷ and in referring to the famous country nurse Arina Rodionovna, who is credited with having stimulated Pushkin's imagination and given him many of the motifs of Russian tales which he used in his works, Dostoevskij warned: "Nowadays many Russian children are taken to be brought up in France. What if some Pushkin has been taken there and if he is not going to have an Arina Rodionovna with him, from his cradle up?"⁸

In examining the elements in Dostoevskij's fiction which parallel typical features of the Russian folktale, we shall select one or two representative instances taken from a multitude of possible illustrations and consider how Dostoevskij adapts the techniques of folklore in his more highly developed literary works. For the most part we shall limit ourselves to his major novels.

I. THE YOUNGEST OF THREE SONS, OR *Ivan Durak*

A frequent motif in Russian fairy tales is a family with three brothers, the youngest supposedly foolish and lazy. His name is usually Stupid Ivan. But when a task is given the brothers, the two elder brothers fail and the youngest conquers—usually through his good, simple heart, as for example by being kind to animals, who, in turn, help him in his later difficulties.⁹

An almost typical family of this kind is the Karamazovs'. Alësha, the youngest, is simple and direct, although not naive and ignorant of the world. His two brothers are engaged actively in the affairs of this world; Mitja is concerned with money and was in the army, Ivan writes articles and is very much part of secular intellectual life; they are both of the world, whereas Alësha is not of it.¹⁰ In his detachment and lack of worldly concern, Alësha has some of the features of the type of "youngest son" of the folktale.

Yet, like his prototype, he turns out to be the wisest and most successful in the long run. Although Alësha does not seek the favors of women, he is their favorite: Katerina Ivanovna, Lise, and Grushenka all show their liking for him. He has an uncanny influence over children; he understands the working of the minds of other

people. The clue to his great power is his innocence, love, and truthfulness. He is utterly modest and unselfseeking. Through his sympathy, which penetrates to the essence of a situation, he outstrips those of more experience, schooling, and pride in their intellectual powers—men like Rakitin, the Westernizers, and the vain big-city defense attorney.

Dostoevskij, then, echoes a typical folk-story motif, but instead of a mere "stupid Ivan" he created a character who dramatized his own spiritual ideals.

2. THE HOLY LUNATIC

Russian folk belief, even more than other nations', attributed special spiritual powers to certain insane persons. Persons of unusual, eccentric, or insane behavior were sometimes believed to have been touched by the hand of God and hence to be entitled to special consideration and reverence. This Wise Idiot type is related to the successful youngest brother type discussed in the preceding section.

The cult of the *jurodivyy* was strong between the tenth and sixteenth centuries and its preservation in later days is attested in Tolstoj's *Childhood* and other nineteenth century works. The *jurodivyy* belonged to a class of religious fanatics who separated themselves from society and all its benefits and often tolerated or even sought the designation of lunatics. They spoke the truth to all, preferably unpleasant truths to cruel rulers; many were martyred and canonized. The linkage of holiness and insanity, which is reflected in the various branches of folklore, was nowhere so strong as in Russia.¹¹

Prince Myshkin is a character with features reminiscent of the type of Holy Lunatic. He had in fact been mentally ill; even after his return from Switzerland, he is hinted to be still abnormally "child-like" sexually; he is an epileptic and has several other characteristics which are considered by other persons to be signs of feeble-mindedness. He is lacking in personal pride and disregards social conventions and material considerations in general. He suffers from his excitability and occasional inability to stop arguing, and is "odd" and "inferior" even in certain trivial details of behavior, as during the Epanchins' party at which he breaks a vase.

Judged from the point of view of the world, Myshkin is insane; judged by Dostoevskij's criteria, he is saintly. Like Alësha, Myshkin is in many ways strikingly perceptive and superior to other men. He is also especially fond of children and has a great influence over them. Even in his assessment of social situations, Myshkin is remarkably clear-sighted, but he refuses to make use of his clear perception in order to reap the advantages which other people would have sought as a matter of course. He is an almost superhumanly keen judge of character; he speaks the truth with utmost frankness. He sacrifices himself for others and his course of action in the novel is a form of martyrdom.

In writing *The Idiot*, Dostoevskij was aware of the difficulties of presenting a "good" character.¹² By giving Myshkin flaws, he made him probable, acceptable, and human. By bringing out his similarities to the type of Holy Idiot, he rendered him more readily credible. He awakened the Russian reader's recollection of previously known characters in the national religious and folk tradition, only to go on to differentiate his character from the stock *jurodivyy* and folktale prototype and to make him a highly individualized character who is entirely Dostoevskij's own. Whether or

not Dostoevskij was aware of doing so, he adapted an archetypal folklore figure to his own original purposes by giving him the moral attributes which he most cherished.¹³

3. MOTHER EARTH

In Russian folklore there are many vestiges of the ancient personification of the earth. In folk literature, the earth is usually called *mat'-syra zemlja*; it is the beginning and end of life. The sect called *stigol'niki*, for instance, were the bearers of the mixed Christian and animistic belief which advocated confession to the earth rather than to the priests. The cult of the earth permeates Russian thought, literature, and folklore.¹⁴ In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskol'nikov

... suddenly remembered Sonja's words: "Go to the cross-roads, bow down to the people, kiss the earth, for you have sinned against it, too, and proclaim in a loud voice to the whole world: I am a murderer!" He trembled all over as he remembered it. The hopeless desolation and anxiety of all those days and especially of the last few hours had so crushed him that he threw himself on the possibility of the new, whole, full feeling. It seemed to come upon him as though it were some nervous fit: it glimmered like a spark in his soul, and then, suddenly, spread like a conflagration through him. Everything within him grew soft all at once, and tears rushed from his eyes. He fell to the ground just where he stood.

He knelt down in the middle of the square, bowed down to the earth, and kissed the dirty earth with joy and rapture. Then he got up and bowed down once more. (536-537)

The "dirty earth" represents the life-giving forces of a proper, decent, sympathetic existence, of community with one's native land and with all the people. It is a symbol of his renunciation of the frame of mind which had isolated him and sapped his life force, and like his cross, is a promise of regeneration by recourse not to reason and self-seeking, but to repentance and the traditional Christian solution, the principle which raised even Lazarus from the dead in the very appropriate passage read to him by Sonja. The joy, the "nervous fit" and "conflagration" in Raskol'nikov, so close to epileptic fits described by Dostoevskij in his writings, marks the moment of starting out on the right path. A force greater than Raskol'nikov begins to act within him, the positive and unconscious force which Dostoevskij chose to symbolize here by the ancient goddess Earth. In this passage the earth becomes identical with the maternal, the elemental, the natural. She is common to all men and unites them all.

The second step of Raskol'nikov's regeneration also takes place under the aegis of the earth (and again in association with Sonja). After her illness, during Raskol'nikov's imprisonment in Siberia, it is by the bank of a river, looking at "a wide stretch of the countryside," that Raskol'nikov entered on a second ecstatic moment which meant "the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection to a new life": "There in the vast steppe, flooded with sunlight, he could see the black tents of the nomads which appeared just like dots in the distance. There there was freedom, there other people were living, people who were not a bit like the people he knew; there time seemed to stand still as though the age of Abraham and his flocks had not passed. Raskol'nikov sat there, looking without moving and without taking his eyes off the vast landscape before him" (557). Again the earth, in the form of a Siberian steppe, together with the people whom it bore, stands for the principle of peace and a new life of love.

A similar interpretation of the meaning of the earth is stated explicitly by Dostoevskij through the mouth of his creation "the paradoxalist," in *The Diary of a Writer*:

Even so, if I perceive the kernel or the idea of the future, it is in Russia. Why so? Because we have a principle which still persists in the people that the earth is everything to it; that it derives everything from the earth and out of the earth—and this is true of the overwhelming majority of the people. But the principal thing is that it is precisely the normal law of man. In the earth, in the soil, there is something sacramental. If you wish to regenerate mankind into something better, if you wish to make men virtually out of beasts—give them land, and you will achieve your purpose. (I, 418)

In *The Brothers Karamazov* the above enthusiastic praise of the earth is dramatized by the Elder Zosima, who dies "in joyful ecstasy, praying and kissing the ground" (389), and by Alësha, who after overcoming his weakness and moment of temptation similarly "threw himself down on the earth," embraced it, and "kissed it weeping, sobbing, and watering it with his tears, and vowed passionately to love it, to love it for ever and ever. 'Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears,' echoed in his soul" (436).

Perhaps the most famous passage in the fiction of Dostoevskij which bears on the subject is the conversation of the crazed, lame sister of Lebjadkin in *The Devils*:

One of our elder sisters, who lived in our convent as penance for uttering prophecies, whispered to me as we were coming out of church: "What is the Mother of God, what do you think?" "She's the great Mother," I said, "the hope of the human race." "Yes," she said, "she is the great mother wet earth (*syra zemlja*), and therein lies a great joy for men. And every earthly sorrow and every earthly tear is a joy for us; and when you have given the earth to drink of your tears to the depth of one foot, you will rejoice at everything at once. And none of your sorrows, none at all, will exist any longer, such is the prophecy." That speech sank into my mind. Since then, when saying my prayers and bowing down to the earth, I kiss the earth every time. I kiss it and weep. (154)

In the same novel, advice similar to that of Sonja to Raskol'nikov is given by Shatov to Stavrogin: "Kiss the earth, drench it with your tears, ask forgiveness" (261).

Raskol'nikov's regaining of contact with the earth is paralleled in a subtle way in *The Devils* in the last days of the old Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovenskiij. After a life of foolish, ineffectual, but well-meaning liberalism, shocked by the catastrophe of the last few days, he leaves, somewhat reminiscent of old Lear and old Tolstoj, just before his death, to wander along a country road. He looks at the countryside; he is picked up by peasants, creatures of the soil;¹⁵ the gospel is read to him by a deeply Russian pilgrim woman (just as Sonja read from it to Raskol'nikov) and strikes him like an overwhelmingly strong light. Again we have here the cluster of references to light, earth, and the gospel, just as in the epilogue of *Crime and Punishment*. Stepan Trofimovich dreams of a "new life" and the purification he wishes for comes to him in the biblical parable of the devils driven out of a herd of swine. After regaining contact with his native land, he dies a death of reconciliation, in sharp contrast to his son, who hangs himself still apart from the earth and who is at the end pointedly described as "the citizen of the canton of Uri" (668).

It is characteristic that in giving dramatic form to one of his cardinal tenets, the

need for regeneration and for closeness to one's people, Dostoevskij had recourse to a motif taken from popular prose and poetry. Through the symbol of the earth, Dostoevskij expressed his belief in the goodness of nature and in the unity of man, just as Zosima had preached it.

4. RITUALIZATION

Russian folktales are distinguished from those of other nations through their formalism. They abound in conventionalized elements: fixed opening and closing formulas, for example. The land sought in a quest is the "thrice ninth land in thrice tenth land"; the hero goes "I don't know if far, I don't know if near." They are full of riddles, proverbs, and incantations. Set idioms describe fixed, recurring characters and situations; just as the earth is "the mother, the wet earth," so other characters, the whirlwind, for instance, have their conventional epithets. The importance of narrative formulas was caught in the popular saying "the style is better than the song (*sklad luchshe pesni*)" and "a song is beautiful through its harmony, a tale through its narrative style (*krasnaja pesnja ladom, a skazka skladom*)." The same formalism which governs style prevails also in the action; there are set tasks, fixed responses, and conventional progressions of catastrophes or successes.¹⁶

A similar ritualization is found in the action of Dostoevskij's works. It is the set gestures and set scenes which give them their frequent sacramental solemnity. There are many recurring symbolic gestures expressive of a variety of attitudes. Bowing is very common. Christ bows to the Grand Inquisitor and thereby wordlessly expresses his love for, and humility before, all men—even the man who is serving his enemy. Zosima bows before Dmitrij:

. . . The Elder rose suddenly from his seat. He distinctly and deliberately bowed down at Dmitrij's feet till his forehead touched the floor. Alësha was so astounded that he failed to assist him when he got up again. There was a faint smile on his lips. . . . Dmitrij stood for a few moments in amazement. Bowing down to him—what did it mean? Finally, he suddenly cried aloud, "Oh God!," hid his face in his hands, and rushed out of the room.

"What did it mean, falling at his feet like that? Was it symbolic [*èmblema*] or what?" said Fëdor Pavlovich. (84-85)

Thus the bow served the purpose of mystifying and suggesting something ominous; it also drew attention to Dmitrij. Later it is realized that it was the suffering of Dmitrij which Zosima anticipated and to which he bowed.

Katerina Ivanovna bows down to Dmitrij also, but she does so for the money he gave her—and never forgives him the humiliation which she experienced. Raskol'nikov's, Zosima's, and Alësha's bows to the earth have already been mentioned. Raskol'nikov also bows before Sonja and kisses her feet.

The manner in which Dostoevskij heightens the significance of a scene which begins in a normal key is exemplified in the following brief passage from *The Insulted and Injured*, in which Natasha tells Prince Valkovskij that she sees through his motives for the supposedly "sincere" visit he paid her: "She got up and began to speak standing, unconscious of doing so in her excitement. After listening for a time, Prince Valkovskij, too, stood up. The whole scene became quite solemn" (182).

Certain incidents are given particular significance through this technique. Kolja's lying down under a train in *The Brothers Karamazov* becomes a self-imposed test, an

ordeal in the medieval sense. Dmitrij's pulling of Captain Snegirëv's beard is to his son a symbol of the world's cruelty and injustice, as is brought out in his repeated pathetic cries, "How he humiliated you." The insults which the Underground Man wishes for and sometimes receives, such as being pushed out of the way or thrown out of a cafe, just as the humiliations he inflicts, as in the story he tells the prostitute and the money he gives her after her visit, are all actions trivial in themselves; but they nevertheless acquire unusually great symbolic significance.

Even the paintings in Dostoevskij's works have a significance beyond themselves. Nastas'ja's portrait overwhelms Myshkin, who sees in it her suffering and the suggestion of future tragedy. Holbein's *Deposition* casts over Rogozhin's house and life an aura of despair and emptiness, and suggests his murderous drive.

In addition there are scenes which are arranged with a formality suggestive of the sacrament. Nastas'ja Filippovna's auctioning herself off and then throwing the hundred rubles into the fire and daring Ganja to pull out the money is an act of formal immolation. The great number of persons present and their arrangement around the central character turns the scene into a solemn occasion which brings to a head the exhibition of Nastas'ja's governing passion, shame. The last great scene in *The Idiot*, the night spent by Rogozhin and Myshkin over Nastas'ja's dead body, with drawn curtains, the body on the bed as if on an altar, and the two men kneeling as two officiating priests, is a grand wake. It is a stylized, ceremonious occasion, a sacrificial conclusion to a tragedy.

The formalized actions, gestures, objects, and scenes are set apart from the ordinary narrative level by the deliberateness, formality, and emphasis which Dostoevskij gives them. They impress other characters in the book with their meaning (which through description of the character's response is impressed upon the reader once more). Their ritualistic characteristics replace the overt, abstract, general statement which would otherwise have been necessary. Indeed they express what is otherwise inexpressible. Nastas'ja's offering herself to the highest bidder and her throwing the money in the fire, just as Christ's kissing the Grand Inquisitor, to recall two examples given above, are the only possible ways of expressing the characters' attitudes and the meaning of the books. The significance of such occasions lifts not only the particular scenes, but the entire novel from the level of ordinary, isolated happenings to that of events of universal significance.

The conventionality of a Russian fairy tale gives the aesthetic pleasure of recognition and familiarity; it may serve as a mnemonic device in oral narration; but above all, it raises the tale from the ordinary world to a realm where magic exists and anything is possible. In the novels of Dostoevskij, the ritualization intensifies the action and while it does not remove it from the realm of the possible, it does add to it the mystery, solemnity, and sacramentality which befit works dealing with the elemental, universal, and archetypal drama of the human soul.

5. *The Landlady*: A FUSION OF FOLKLORE MOTIFS

Dostoevskij's novelette *The Landlady* (1847) is remarkable in being a literary recreation of oral traditions in plot as well as in style.

In this tale, the student Ordynov meets a mysterious couple, Murin and Katerina, comes to live with them, and gradually grows acquainted with their past history and

present relationship. The story is viewed through the mists of his frequently delirious and feverish mind. Both Murin and Katerina are surrounded by mystery, and we soon learn that Murin has unusual powers, a dark "gift" (94). He "looks people in the face" (93) and can sway them by his revelations and predictions. His most outstanding power is that which he exercises over Katerina, who is not only his mistress, but also his daughter. Dostoevskij's tale combines the two folklore motifs of the man with extraordinary power over a woman with that of the incestuous relationship of father and daughter. Murin has been a lover of Katerina's mother and Katerina is their child. As she grew up, Murin became attracted by her, succeeded in gaining ascendancy over her, and persuaded her to admit him to the house and even to become his accomplice in murdering her supposed father (whom he threw into a red-hot cauldron) and in starting a conflagration which also took the life of her mother. Katerina then fled with him. At that point a third motif enters the tale through Murin's brigand associations, that of the Volga outlaws' tale tradition.¹⁷ The couple flee across "the broad, broad river" (109) which Murin addresses in words typical of Russian oral poetry: "Hail, mother, stormy river, drink-giver to God's people and to me food-giver. Tell me, have you guarded my goods, while I was away, are my wares safe? . . . Take all, stormy and insatiable river, and only let me keep my vow and cherish my precious pearl!" (109).

The uncanny power which Murin holds over Katerina is emphasized not only by her submissiveness in her actions, but also by numerous passages the phrasing of which leaves no doubts about their origin in oral literature. Katerina complains to Murin:

My life is not my own, but another's, and my will (*voljushka*) is bound (99). . . . It was he who has ruined me! I have sold my soul to him. . . . He says that when he dies he will come and fetch my sinful soul. I am his, I have sold my soul to him. He tortured me, he reads me his books. Here is his book. He says I have committed a deadly sin. . . . When I listen to his voice, it is as though it were not he speaking, but some one else, some one evil, some one you could not soften with anything, could not entreat, and my heart grows heavy and burns. . . . My prayers will not reach the Lord's just ones. . . . I am a daughter who has been cursed. I am a murderess (*dushegubka*); my mother cursed me! I killed my own mother! . . . I hid her in the wet earth (101-103). . . . The unclean spirit gained possession (*nechistyj kupil*) of my soul (105). . . . He looked at me so that I trembled like a leaf. "Listen to me," said he, "fair maid," and his eyes burned strangely. "It is not idle words I speak, I make you a solemn promise. As much happiness as you give me, so much will I be a gentleman to you, and if ever you do not love me—do not speak, do not drop one word, do not trouble, but stir only your sable eyebrow, turn your black eye, stir only your little finger and I will give you back your love with golden freedom; only, my proud beauty, then there will be an end to my life too." (110)

The story is marked by two spiritual "duels" involving in the first case Murin and Katerina and in the second Murin and Ordynov. In the first encounter, Murin, who had struck Katerina, takes out his knife, gives it to her, and offers her his bare arm with the words: "Here, cut away at it, rejoice over it, even as I insulted you, while I, proud girl, will bow down to the earth to you in return" (105). The result of this ostensibly expiatory gesture is Katerina's submission. The second time Ordynov with a knife in his hand approaches Murin, who pretends to be asleep, but it seems that "one of the old man's eyes slowly opened and looked at him, laughing. Their eyes

met. For some minutes Ordynov gazed at him fixedly. . . . Suddenly it seemed to him that the old man's whole face began to laugh and that a diabolical, killing, icy laughter resounded at last throughout the room. A hideous, dark thought crawled like a snake into his head. He shuddered; the knife fell from his hands and dropped with a clang upon the floor. . . . The old man, pale, slowly got up from the bed and angrily kicked the knife into the corner of the room" (128). The common feature of both episodes is Murin's daring his opponents to kill him; he purposely delivers himself into their hands, passively, knowing full well that by tempting them and then overcoming them through their own failure to strike him, he will establish his hegemony over them all the more securely. In primitive contests of wills, Murin conquers both Katerina and Ordynov.

Another folklore feature of the story is the curse of Katerina's mother: "I will tell him whose daughter you are, whose bastard child! You are not my daughter, you are a false serpent! You are an accursed child!" (106).

The imagery and phrasing add an all-pervasive reinforcement of the folk quality of *The Landlady*. It is through the diction as well as through the attitude towards the river that the Volga, for example, is presented in a manner echoing the oral tradition in the passages cited above. The following are some of the phrases from *byliny* and folktales: wet earth (103), evil eye (107), the unclean spirit—*nechistyj* (105), "Tell me, my own, tell me, my dove, coo to us like a dove your tender word" (114), "Tell me for once, old man, in what blue sky, beyond what seas and forests, my bright falcon lives. And is he keenly searching for his mate" (123), "You want to know a great deal at once, my full-fledged nestling, my fluttering bird!" (124), "Her head is a clever serpent" (125), "If she asks for bird's milk I'll get her bird's milk. . . . A weak man cannot stand alone. Give him half the kingdoms of the earth to own, try it, and what do you think? He will hide himself in your slipper at once, he will make himself so small" (137). There are also the proverbs "Wit has overstepped wisdom" (136) and "A woman's heart is not like the depth of the sea" (137). Traditional in folklore is Katerina's question after Murin's murder of her father, "Why are your hands covered with blood?" and his answer, "I stabbed your dogs, they barked too loud at a late guest" (109).

There are several explicit references to folktales. Katerina asks Ordynov to become her adopted brother and tells him the story of brothers who lived in a dark forest and adopted a fair maiden who had lost her way in the forest: "They all called her sister, gave her freedom, and she was equal to all. Do you know the fairy tale?" (78). Ordynov's delirium is filled with images of folklore:

He dimly felt that an unknown old man held all his future years in thrall, and, trembling, he could not turn his eyes away from him. The wicked old man followed him about everywhere. He peeped out . . . from under every bush in the woods . . . took the shape of every doll, grimacing and laughing in his hands, like a spiteful evil gnome . . . he drove away the bright spirits whose gold and sapphire wings rustled about his cot . . . and began whispering to him every night long wonderful fairy tales, unintelligible to his childish imagination, but thrilling and tormenting him with terror and unchildlike passion. . . . Then the child suddenly woke up a man. . . . He understood all at once that he was alone and alien to all the world, alone in a corner not his own. (81-83)

When he awoke, it seemed to him that "the wonderful fairy tale was still going on. . . . He heard talk of dark forests, of bold brigands (*pro likhikh razbojnikov*), of some daring bravo (*pro udalago molodca*), maybe Sten'ka Razin himself, of merry drunkards, bargemen, of a fair maiden, and of Mother Volga" (83).

This tale, from an early period of Dostoevskij's career, a fantasy which shocked the rationalist Belinskij, is a tissue of folktale diction and imagery, and its plot is based on the three folklore motifs, man-woman dominance, the incestuous father-daughter relationship, and the Volga outlaws' tale. All its elements are united by being seen through the point of view of the student Ordynov and by being transfigured through the author's psychological emphasis.

6. FOLKTALES, SONGS, PROVERBS, AND OTHER MOTIFS

Tales. The most prominent folktales retold in the works of Dostoevskij are those of Vlas and of the onion.

The story published in *The Citizen (Grazhdanin)* in 1873 under the title *Vlas* (an allusion to a poem by Lermontov) is a version of the legend about the attempt to desecrate the Eucharist. Dostoevskij introduces it as a "tale from folk life" (I, 34). A peasant crawled on his knees into a monk's room, declared that he was damned, and went on to relate what he had done some years previously. Several young men in the village had challenged each other to see which of them would do the most daring and insolent deed. Egged on by one of them, the peasant did not swallow the Eucharist during Lent Communion, but saved it, placed it on a stick, and aimed at it with a gun. However, just as he was about to fire, Jesus appeared on the Cross where the Eucharist had been. The young peasant fell on the ground unconscious.

The tale has many analogues in Russia and in the West.¹⁸ The significance of Dostoevskij's use of it lies in the fact that he saw it as a folk expression of those qualities which he believed particularly prominent among the Russians: the desire to reach for extremes and to negate one's own most sacred ideals; the craving for suffering and self-destruction; and the thirst for martyrdom, followed by repentance and salvation. The story was to him also a prototype of the relation between the victim and the torturer, who felt "they mutually needed each other in order to finish the undertaking together" (I, 40). Thus Dostoevskij resorted to a folk legend in order to convey an idea fundamental to many of his works.

The story of the onion, in a chapter by the same name, occurs at a crucial point of the plot of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Alësha has been shaken by the death of the Elder Zosima and especially by the bad odor coming from the Elder's decomposing body; he almost rebels against God, eats sausages and drinks vodka, and then goes with Rakitin to Grushen'ka. Yet instead of completing his fall, he is regenerated with her help. The temptress turns out to be a savior. "Though I am bad, I did give away an onion," she tells him, and goes on to relate the story as an illustration of what she meant. Grushen'ka reports having heard the story as a child from a cook. Adorned with the traditional Russian opening formula for a fairy tale, the story shows several features of the oral tradition in its phrasing:

Once upon a time there was an old peasant woman, a wicked, very wicked woman she was, and she died. Not a single good deed was left behind her. The devils caught her and plunged her into a lake of fire. So her guardian angel stood and wondered what good

deed of hers he could remember to tell to God. He remembered and told God: "She once pulled up an onion in her garden and gave it to a beggar woman." And God answered: "You take that same onion, then, hold it out to her in the lake, and let her take hold and be pulled out. And if you can pull her out of the lake, let her come to Paradise, but if the onion breaks, then the woman must stay where she is." The angel ran to the woman and held out the onion to her. "Come, old woman," he said, "catch hold and I'll pull you out." And he began pulling her out carefully. He had almost pulled her right out, when other sinners in the lake, seeing how she was being pulled out, began catching hold of her so as to be pulled out with her. But the woman was a wicked, very wicked woman, and she began kicking them. "It's me they are pulling out, not you; it's my onion, not yours." As soon as she said that, the onion broke. And the woman fell into the lake and is burning until this day. The angel wept and went away. (423-424)

The story and the visit help Alësha to regain his faith, which reaches its climax in the next chapter, "Cana of Galilee." The tale was used by Dostoevskij at a very important moment, as a device marking a critical point of Alësha's spiritual development, and is spoken, characteristically, by Grushen'ka, who is in this novel the embodiment of the salutary influences of the Russian people and of Russian womanhood in particular.

Dostoevskij wrote that he had taken the tale from a peasant woman's narration and thought it had never been written down before. Yet many analogues as well as a printed version antedating *The Brothers Karamazov* exist.¹⁹

Songs. Smerdjakov sings stanzas from two songs in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

With invincible force
I am bound to my dear.
Oh Lord, have mercy
On her and on me!
On her and on me!
On her and on me!

On her and on me!
On her and on me! (265-266)

Whatever you may say,
I shall go far away.
I shall enjoy the pleasures of life

I'd give the Tsar's crown
If my dear one were in good health
Oh Lord, have mercy
On her and on me!

And shall live in the capital city.
I shall not grieve,
I shall not grieve at all,
I do not mean to grieve. (268)

Dostoevskij wrote about this song in a letter: "I did not make up this song, but wrote it down in Moscow. I heard it forty years ago. It was created by merchants' clerks of the third class and passed on to lackeys, and was never written down by a collector. It appears for the first time in my book."²⁰ The effect striven for in this scene is the grotesqueness and monstrosity of Smerdjakov in the role of a lover, singing with "a sugary falsetto" and accompanying himself on the guitar. For it is he who says "Poetry is all rubbish" (266) and "I hate all Russia" (267) and thus, by Dostoevskij's criteria, condemns himself.

Later in the action of the same novel, at Mokroe, a peasant song is sung in chorus:

The master tempted the girls,
Do they love him or not?

The soldier tempted the girls,
Do they love him or not?

The master will beat me painfully,
I won't love him.

The soldier will carry his knapsack,
And I behind him . . .²¹

The gypsy tempted the girls,
Do they love him or not?

The merchant tempted the girls,
Do they love him or not?

The gypsy will steal,
I shall grieve because of him.

The merchant will trade,
And I shall rule. (527)

Significantly, Grushen'ka enjoys the singing, whereas Kalganov, the foolish person out of touch with the traditional life of the people, dislikes the song and expresses his contempt in a direct reference to folk customs: "It is piggish, all this folk stuff; those are those spring games of theirs, when they spend all the summer night long guarding the sun" (527). About this song Dostoevskij wrote with pride: "The song sung in chorus I wrote down from real life and it is really an example of the latest peasant creation."²² The positive characters in the novel, Grushen'ka and Mitja, participate in the folk festivities, whereas the negative one, Kalganov, despises them.

Another of the many examples of songs inserted in the novels of Dostoevskij is that of Marija Lebjadkina in *The Devils*: "I do not need a new, tall mansion, / I shall stay in this little cell, / I shall live to save myself, / I shall pray for you to God" (156).

Proverbs and Idioms. Proverbs, usually in the mouth of a favorably presented character who is close to the people, are too numerous even to begin to list. Two were cited above in the discussion of *The Landlady*. The long lists of proverbs and folk sayings which Dostoevskij wrote down in his notebooks testify to his interest in them.

In *The Diary of a Writer* he devoted an article to a discussion of an urban folk expression, *strjuckie* (shabby, vain, trashy people), and said of this local Petersburg idiom that it was "a word used only by the simple folk." He filled several pages with a definition of the term and an account of its origins, and advocated its adoption by "educated classes" (II, 880-882). In a companion article he pointed out that he had been the first to use in print a verb (*stushevat'sja* 'to vanish suddenly') which had been coined by his classmates at the military Engineering School, and described the process of group creation of a neologism (II, 882-885).

Other Motifs. In the story *A Gentle Spirit* (Krotkaja, 1876) several themes resemble motifs of Russian oral literature, some of them reminiscent of those in *The Landlady*. The narrator's struggle to gain dominance over his wife is similar to Murin's relationship with Katerina, even though Dostoevskij psychologizes the situation much more markedly here than he had done in the earlier story: "In my eyes she was so conquered, so humiliated, so crushed, that sometimes I felt agonies of pity for her, though sometimes the thought of her humiliation was actually pleasing to me. The thought of our inequality pleased me" (576). He, too, tempts her to kill him, leaving a revolver in the open when he goes to sleep, and thereby crushes her. His wife goes to her death clutching an icon in a holy suicide. The ending of the story is a direct reference to folklore: "Oh, immovable force! (*kosnost'*) Oh nature!" the narrator-husband exclaims, "men are alone on the face of the earth, that is what is terrible. 'Is there any living man on the field?' shouts the Russian hero (*bogatyr'*). I, who am not a hero (*nebogaty'r*), also shout so, and no one answers" (589-590).

In *The Devils*, Marija Lebjadkina brings folkloristic expressions into the social circle of her husband Nikolaj Stavrogin. It is she who reported a conversation identifying Mother Earth with the Virgin Mary, and who had shocked her Mother Superior by saying that God and Nature were one and the same thing (154). A deranged but

occasionally wise woman, she reminds Stavrogin of "Grishka Otrep'ev [the pretender to the Russian throne] who has been damned in seven cathedrals" (281), calls him a "prince," and continues, "it is impossible for a falcon to turn into an owl. . . . My man is a clear falcon and a prince. You are an owl and a shopkeeper. . . . My man will bow down to God or not bow down to Him, just as he pleases. . . . As soon as I saw your mean face when I fell and you picked me up, it was as if a worm had crawled into my heart; it's not *he*, I thought. . . . My falcon would never have been ashamed of me in front of a young society lady! Oh, dear Lord, the only thing that kept me happy all these five years was the thought that my falcon was living somewhere beyond the mountains, flying there and looking at the sun" (283-284). In the manner of a Russian Cassandra, she leaves a parting curse with Stavrogin: "She shouted after him in the darkness, shrieking and laughing, 'Grishka Otrep'ev, anathema!'" (284) and goes to her death.

There are numerous additional parallels to motifs of the folktale and folklore in general. The decay of Zosima's body and the preservation of Iljusha's is a direct reference to a popular superstition. Sleep has in Dostoevskij the regenerative functions which it has for the heroes of the folktale and *bylina*, who are notorious for their ability to sleep long (but, if necessary, to remain awake); when Prince Myshkin falls asleep while waiting on the bench for Aglaja, for instance, his behavior is in keeping with the fairy tale character. Dreams bring revelations and visions in Dostoevskij. Humorous use is made of the belief in ghosts in the cemetery scene in *Bobok*. Smerdjakov may be viewed as a Golem-figure, a servant who gets out of control, a tool which smashes both its creator-master's world and itself. The title of *The Devils* (*Besy*) is a reference primarily to the Gospel, but also, through allusion to Pushkin's poem, to the folklore demons.

Enough has been said to suggest the abundance of folklore traits in Dostoevskij. It should be stressed that the similarities in themselves are not sufficient to warrant the claim that Dostoevskij in every case consciously imitated the folk tradition or even was himself aware of all the similarities, especially since in some instances literary antecedents (the French, Russian, and German novel, as well as books like Carl Gustav Carus' *Psyche* and Gotthild Heinrich von Schubert's *Symbolik des Traumes*) duplicate the possible influence of folklore. But the parallels are nevertheless remarkable in view of Dostoevskij's interest in folklore and his closeness to the Russian popular traditions in general.

The striking fact is that, in the main, the parallels to folklore are found in places which touch upon, and dramatize, themes of the greatest importance to the author, as for example in connection with the characters of positive heroes, Alësha and Myshkin. It seems that in his greatest scenes, and in passages in which Dostoevskij dealt with issues that meant the most to him, his creative process came closest to the resources accumulated and passed down by generations of Russian storytellers, perhaps not because of intentional imitation, but through unconscious recollection and a basic similarity between his sensibility and that of the popular artist. There is an affinity between the works of the "novelist of city life" and the folklore of the Russian countryside as well as city.

We do not know much about who Dostoevskij's Arina Rodionovna may have been. But it is fitting that the works of the Russian author who believed so strongly in

the value of a union with his native soil and people should lean so heavily on Russian folk literature.

NOTES

¹ N. K. Piksarov, "Dostoevskij i fol'klor," *Sovetskaja ètnografija*, No. 1-2 (1934), 152-165, drew attention to several such reproductions.

² Andrej Mikhajlovich Dostoevskij, *Vospominanija* (Leningrad, 1930), pp. 44-45.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The best account of Afanas'ev's collection and work is Jurij Sokolov, "Zhizn' i nauchnaja dejatel'nost' Aleksandra Nikolaevicha Afanas'eva," in A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki* (Academia, 1936), I, ix-lvii. The Russian folktale is discussed in George [Jurij] Sokolov's *Russian Folklore*, trans. Catherine Smith (New York, 1950), and the fairy tale in an appendix by Roman Jakobson in *Russian Fairy Tales* (New York, 1945). Bibliographies are given by Jakobson and by William E. Harkins, *Bibliography of Slavic Folk Literature* (New York, 1953).

⁵ A. N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie legendy* (London, 1859), p. v.

⁶ Throughout this article page references after quotations from Dostoevskij are to the most readily available English translations: *The Diary of a Writer*, trans. Boris Brasol (New York, 1948), 2 vols.; *Crime and Punishment*, trans. David Magarshack (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1951); *The Devils*, trans. David Magarshack (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1953); *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York, 1945); *The Insulted and Injured*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York, 1923); *The Landlady, Vlas, and A Gentle Spirit*, trans. Constance Garnett, in *The Short Stories of Dostoevsky*, ed. William Phillips (New York, 1946). Wherever a more accurate rendering was necessary, I have taken the liberty of revising the quotations, using the text in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij F. M. Dostoevskogo* (St. Petersburg, 1885-1886), 6 vols.

⁷ *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatlenijakh*, in *Polnoe sobranie*, II, 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ N. P. Andreev, *Ukazatel' skazochnykh sjuzhetov* (Leningrad, 1929), types 550-551; cf. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington, Ind., 1932), motifs Lo-L99.

¹⁰ According to the plan for "The Life of the Great Sinner," Dostoevskij may have intended that Alësha be initiated into the world by various later adventures and temptations. But in *The Brothers Karamazov* he is still apart from the world despite the fact that Zosima sent him into it.

¹¹ References to "holy fools in Christ" occur in George Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (Cambridge, Mass., 1946). Cf. Thompson, *Motif-Index*, motifs L100-L199.

¹² He wrote in a letter: "The chief idea of the novel is to portray the positively good man. There is nothing more difficult to do, and especially now. All writers, and not only ours, but even all Europeans, who have tried to portray the *positively* good man have always failed. Because this is an enormous problem." Quoted in Ernest J. Simmons, *Dostoevsky: The Making of a Novelist* (London, 1950), p. 166.

¹³ In the notebooks for *The Devils* he frequently referred to Marija Lebjadkina (see our sections 3. and 6.) as *jurodivaja*. *Zapisnye tetradi F. M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. E. N. Konshina (Academia, 1935), *passim*.

¹⁴ Fedotov, *Russian Mind*, *passim*; G. [George] Fedotov, *Stikhi dukhovnye* (Paris, 1935), pp. 67-84; R. V. Pletnev, "Zemlja," in *O Dostoevskom: sbornik statej*, ed. A. L. Bem (Prague, 1929), I, 153-162.

¹⁵ In the story *Peasant Marej* the closeness of the peasant to the earth is pointed up by reference to his "soil-encrusted finger."

¹⁶ Sokolov, *Russian Folklore*, pp. 429-433; Jakobson, *Russian Fairy Tales*, pp. 643-649; and Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson, "Slavic Folklore," *Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach (New York, 1950), II, 1019-1025, are among the works discussing the points summarized in this paragraph. The illustrations are drawn from the first two works.

¹⁷ A. L. Bem, "Dramatiztsa bredy," *O Dostoevskom: sbornik*, I, 109, makes this point. Bem also discusses the literary influences on *The Landlady*, Gogol, Hoffmann, and others.

¹⁸ Piksarov, "Dostoevskij," lists several.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Dostoevskij left the line incomplete with the remark "A line which could not pass the censor followed, sung extremely openly and producing a furor in the audience."

²² Piksarov, "Dostoevskij."

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THE STORY OF VAN'KA KAIN

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THE name of Van'ka Kain has become a by-word of iniquity in Russian. N. D. Ušakov's dictionary gives the following definition: "great criminal, murderer, moral monster." Frequently, the people who use this name as an insult do not know that Van'ka Kain really existed; they imagine him to be a character of fiction, a legendary burglar who for a long time escaped punishment, fooled the police, and accompanied his daring exploits with witty sarcasm and crude jokes.¹

The story of his life was told in a series of publications which appeared at short intervals during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. V. Sipovskij in his bibliography of eighteenth century literature mentioned fourteen different editions of Kain's tale in twenty-five years and considered it the most popular story of the period.² The Harvard College Library owns a copy which belongs to an unrecorded edition, presumably of the same period,³ and previously unknown editions have been discovered since Sipovskij published his bibliography.

Most of the extant copies belong in the category of chapbooks, poorly printed on cheap paper without name of author and often without date. It is quite possible that many copies were destroyed, as they were considered unworthy of respectable libraries both for their content and outward appearance. In the nineteenth century the publication of the story of Van'ka Kain was forbidden by the censorship for several decades, but certain of his adventures were introduced into the plots of historical novels. The original story continued to circulate, and quotations from it have been recorded as late as 1908 in the argot of the underworld.⁴ Kain's name also survived in folksongs. Literary studies of the story and of its historical background were published by G. Esipov in 1869, P. Bessonov in 1872, and D. Mordovcev in 1876.⁵ Sipovskij, in the article published in 1902, discussed it as one of the first Russian novels.

The many editions of Van'ka Kain's story have been divided into three main types, as described below. Material for the present article was furnished by Type C.

A. A short story of Kain's adventures told in the third person. The first recorded copy of the story belongs to this type. It was published anonymously in 1775.

B. A biography written by Matvej Komarov,⁶ published twice in 1779 and several times reprinted. The elements of the story are the same as in the type first listed, but the presentation is different. The author suggests motivations and psychological explanations for Kain's anti-social behavior. His attitude is that of an indulgent and moralizing judge. The biography is preceded by an introduction in which the author tells that he heard Kain relating his adventures while he was waiting for his trial. Later the author compared manuscripts of Kain's adventures with oral stories. To Komarov's second edition was attached a collection of songs, two of which refer to Kain.

C. An autobiography, allegedly written by Kain himself, the first edition of which appeared in 1777; the same autobiography with small variants in the text, published with a

conclusion in the third person which is exactly the same as the conclusion in Komarov's book; other editions accompanied by collections of songs, some of which were attributed to Kain.

The autobiography presents many features which are usually associated with folklore. It is an anonymous story, and it exists in many variants which can be traced back to manuscript versions and to oral tradition. The cycle of adventures revolves around one hero, a historical personality famous in his lifetime as a brigand, presented in the story as a master-thief and at times as a protector of the poor. His name appears in folksongs. Many passages of the autobiography are written in rhymed and rhythmic prose which follows the pattern of rhymed folktales. The first part of the story and the concluding words of certain paragraphs closely resemble the jokes and anecdotes in rhymed prose which form the repertory of contemporary professional storytellers.⁷ The same type of rhymed jokes is frequent in the explanatory inscriptions on cheap woodcuts, *lubočnye kartinki*, that illustrated folktales and anecdotes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Kain was well known to the police of Moscow in the thirties and forties of the eighteenth century. Many events of his life were duly recorded in the police archives, and an account of them—included in Esipov's "Van'ka Kain"—enables us to compare the image created by the story and songs with the real Van'ka.

Van'ka Kain was born in 1718 in the province of Rostov. His name was Ivan Osipov. Van'ka is a popular diminutive for Ivan; Osipov was his patronymic; the nickname Kain (Cain) seems to have been applied to him very early, for in official documents he is always referred to as the "informer Kain." He was the son of a peasant, a serf. Taken to Moscow at thirteen, he became a house-servant slave, *dvorovyj*, in the home of the wealthy merchant Filat'ev. He ingratiated himself with the police by denouncing his master and his master's servants when a soldier was killed in their yard. In reward he obtained his freedom and settled in Moscow. For a while he lived in the executioner's house, and it is possible that the nickname Kain was acquired because of this association. The word "brother" has a much wider semantic range in Russian than in English: fellow-servants and fellow-workers were addressed as "brothers," and when Van'ka delivered his "brothers" into the hands of the law and sided with the officers of the law, he became a fratricide, like Cain.

For a number of years Kain got all his livelihood from robberies. He was caught several times, but each time managed to escape punishment. In 1741 he presented himself to the police and offered his services as an informer. In an official document, which he dictated, Kain explained that he knew many robbers and highwaymen and promised to redeem his criminal past by helping to arrest them. To prove his sincerity he confessed his past exploits, or such of them as he deemed safe to confess. From this statement it appears that he had been active with a group of robbers in the streets of Moscow and out of town, at fairs and pilgrimages, but he denied having ever committed murder or taken part in any armed attack in the company of highwaymen.

The police thereafter kept a detailed record of the offenders denounced by Kain or arrested with his help. He was accompanied in his raids by officials and had soldiers under his orders. He delivered into the hands of the police beggars, vagabonds, petty thieves, and gang leaders. He was allowed to open a gambling house in order to keep in touch with the criminal world, and he complained that he was not paid adequately

for the services rendered to the administration. He organized public festivities during carnival week and was so successful that the locality where the festivities took place retained the name of "Kain's Hill" for over a century. The city of Moscow usually farmed out the right to organize these ritual rejoicings, probably a lucrative undertaking.

In 1743 Kain married a widow who had been arrested during his first raid and kept in prison until she consented to become his wife. Husband and wife started a profitable business: they took bribes from suspects, stored and sold stolen goods, and offered shelter to thieves for a share in the profits. At the same time, Kain bribed officials and offered them illicit entertainment in his gambling den. Soon he became the leader of a dangerous gang that attacked honest merchants and criminals alike. He arrested people under false pretences and extorted money from their relatives. This was discovered and he was arrested, flogged, and released under promise to amend his actions. Another attempt to arrest him for protecting deserters was met with open revolt from Kain's associates, and he was set free by the mob after a street fight with members of the police.

During the great fires which devastated Moscow in 1748, a wave of crime swept over the city, and Kain was suspected of being the secret leader of organized burglaries. A special commission was created to clean up the city when Empress Elisabeth decided to move to Moscow with her court. Kain had so cunningly bribed police officials, and had so many supporters, that a new set of employees had to be appointed to obtain an indictment. Finally he was arrested upon the complaint of a police official whose young daughter he had abducted. The investigation and trial lasted from 1749 to 1756. During that period Kain remained in prison, but he bribed prison wardens and was accorded unusual privileges. He received guests, who brought him food and wine, and he talked freely to visitors, entertaining them with the story of his adventures. His jokes were repeated in the streets of Moscow.

Kain was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to hard labor. He was flogged, branded, had his nostrils torn, and was sent to the hard labor prison of Rogervik, also called the Baltic Port (near Tallin). There is a version of his story which relates that he was later exiled to Siberia and died there. One version of the autobiography specifies that it was "written in 1764 by Kain himself at the Baltic Port." However, we know from police reports that Kain could not write.

It is possible that he dictated his memoirs to a fellow-convict, and that from Rogervik manuscript versions were brought to Moscow and later became the foundation of the books, but we know that stories about Kain's adventures and the tricks he used in order to fool the police circulated as short anecdotes during his criminal activity. He was extremely popular with the workers of the wool and linen mills of Moscow. The administration was concerned with the fact that many of these workers had criminal records and used forged passports. The men who beat off the police in the street fight came from these mills. Kain was the protector of many escapees and deserters. The jokes and repartee of Kain while he was on trial revived the memory of his most daring exploits. At that particular period of Russian history, the members of the judiciary and of the police were openly criticized by public opinion. This attitude is reflected both in the oral tradition and in the literature of the period.

For instance, the animal folktale "Of Erš Eršovič" ("Ruff, son of Ruff"), which is

a parody and a satire of the judiciary processes of the seventeenth century, was still so popular during the eighteenth century that it was published in woodcuts (see Azadovskij, n.7). The playwright Lukin (1737-1794) and the poet Kapnist (1757-1823) represented members of the judiciary as outright villains, and Matvej Komarov introduced in his biography of Kain long digressions on the corruption of officials. The cruel practical jokes which Kain played on these employees, and the proverbs and proverbial phrases he cleverly used to parry accusations, were greeted with sympathy by men of all walks of life.

Kain was imprisoned in 1749, and the first description of his life appeared in print in 1775. During the intervening twenty-five years a traditional image of Kain was developed through anecdotes and short tales, similar in form to the folktales about thieves and smart peasants or about soldiers who outwit their enemies. This image was stabilized with the publishing of the autobiography, but we will see that the book reflects the disparate elements which existed simultaneously, though separately, before they were joined in one story.

The titles of the different editions vary slightly: "The detailed and true story of the famous robber and brigand Van'ka Kain . . .," "The life and adventures of Van'ka Kain, famous robber and brigand and Moscow informer . . .," "The story of the famous robber . . .," "The story of the famous Russian robber . . .," and the like. In most of them Kain is referred to as the "famous robber and brigand and Moscow informer." Komarov stated in his introduction that it was the fame of Kain which prompted him to write his book in order to demonstrate that Russia could produce a master-thief who was able, in this profession, to compete with the celebrated French robber Cartouche (1693-1721). The story of Cartouche was published in Russian in 1771, translated from a German text which was, in turn, the translation from a French biography published in 1722, immediately after Cartouche's execution.⁸ The Russian translation was extremely popular, particularly with the younger generation. In certain editions of Kain's life story, the Russian thief was presented to the public as "the Russian Cartouche," and the biographies of both outlaws were sometimes published together. Kain's daring and wit, and his ability to escape punishment, became for the reader matters of national pride.

The autobiography consists of many short episodes, some of which—particularly in the first part—are connected with each other and form the logical development of a plot. But most of the episodes have no connection with the previous or following ones, and several do not appear in all editions. There are about fifty-five different episodes in all.

The autobiography can be divided into six parts followed by a short conclusion. The first part begins with the words: "I, Ivan Osipov, nicknamed Kain, was born in 1714, in the reign of the lord emperor Peter the Great, from parents of low rank, inhabitants of the capital city of the Russian Empire—Moscow. . . ."⁹ The autobiography makes Kain older than he really was and connects him definitely with Moscow. His fame as a Moscovite was also stressed in the titles of certain editions.

After introducing himself in this formal way, Kain tells the first part of his story in irregularly rhymed prose. He has been doing his best to please his master, the tale goes, but he is continuously beaten by him, and decides to run away. He takes from his master's casket all the money he can carry, dresses in his master's clothes, and

walks out before dawn. A friend of his, Kamčatka, is waiting for him outside. (Kamčatka appears in police records under his full name: Pëtr Romanov Smirnoj-Zakutin, nicknamed Kamčatka. According to these records, he started as Kain's mentor in crime and later became his victim.)

On his master's gate Kain writes (though the real Kain was illiterate) his first rhymed joke: "Drink water as a goose, eat bread as a pig; / May the devil work for you, but not I." They climb over the fence of a priest's garden and find the gatekeeper asleep. He awakes and asks them how they got in. Kamčatka beats him with a stick and tells him: "Is it necessary to open the master's gate to every parishioner? / In that case there wouldn't be any time for sleep." There is a pun on the word *prixožanin* 'parishioner,' which may also mean 'any person coming in.' This type of joke, rhymed as is the previous one, is very frequent in the story.

Kain and Kamčatka put on the priest's clothes, and this enables them to pass through a cordon of police guards. (Masquerading and impersonating someone else is a recurrent motif of folktales and is also frequent in the autobiography.) Kain seeks shelter under the Stone Bridge (*Kamennyi Most*), which had the reputation of being a robbers' den. This reputation survived in the modern puppet theater of the Russian folk play *Petruška* (Pulcinella), in which one of the disreputable characters explains that his dwelling is "under the Stone Bridge." That is where Kain meets with a group of pickpockets, whom he derogatively describes as "small thieves" doing "dirty work." Already he has greater ambitions.

The thieves demand money to shelter Kain. They speak in circumlocutions interpolated with proverbs. The whole scene is rhymed. They predict Kain's future: "Brother, you will become / A coat of our cloth. / Stay with us in our house / Which is well provided for: / The posts are hung / With bareness and nakedness; / And the barn is full of hunger and cold."

A close variant of the last four lines is found in a short autobiographical narrative made in 1881 by an impoverished peasant, a simpleton, to the writer L. Tolstoj. The whole narrative of the peasant is rhymed.¹⁰

The next morning Kain is recognized by another servant and brought home. He is tied to a post in the yard not far from a chained bear, and is supposed to get nothing to eat for two days. A girl-servant who feeds the bear secretly brings food to Kain and tells him that their master has hidden in the yard the body of a soldier killed by his men. When the master summons Van'ka to have him flogged, the boy pronounces the dreaded words *slovo i delo* 'word and deed,' which meant that he knew something important concerning the security of the state. According to the law of the time, his master was bound to deliver him immediately to the office of the secret police.

There Kain is questioned by a secretary and pretends to be a simpleton who does not know the meaning of many words used in an office. When he is asked to what article of the law his accusation refers, he replies that he does not know anything about "articles, pounds, weight and overweight," and he refuses to speak further until he is ushered into the presence of the chief. Only then does he divulge the fate of the soldier, and he is immediately sent home with a guard to arrest his master and the servant. Kain takes his revenge from the latter in a few sarcastic words that contain a pun and two contrasting images joined by a similar verb—a frequent feature

of Russian proverbs: "You caught me in Squire's Row in daytime, / And I am catching you at night. / So none of us will owe anything to the other." Squire's Row (*Panskij rjad*) was the part of Merchant's Row where cloth was sold. The servant who had caught Kain in Squire's Row is now arrested by Kain in front of his squire's house. The joke is built on the contrasts: squire—servant; day—night; and on the double meaning of the word "squire."

Asked by the judge whether master and servant together are responsible for the murder, Kain casts suspicion on both and advises that they be submitted to torture. His reply is a series of circumlocutions built around popular proverbial phrases: "The regimental uniform of the master / Is the same as that of the servant. / Sidor and Karp live in Kolomna; / With whom do not sin and mishap live? / Water can conquer anything, / And fire will burn even a priest."

In addition to the two well known proverbial phrases in the fourth and sixth lines, Kain uses the elements of a third, "Sidor has his own tradition, and Karp has his own," in which Sidor and Karp are presented as opposites. The church days of these two saints are in May and October respectively and are connected with contrasting—spring and autumn—agricultural chores and traditions. Both names are frequently joined in proverbs, representing two contrasting elements. Kain's speech presents four contrasting pairs: master—servant; St. Sidor—St. Karp; sin—mishap; water—fire. Each of these pairs has something in common: dress, dwelling, power. The whole speech carries the implication that "though master and servant are socially very far from each other, they are both guilty, and will confess if tortured [water and fire]."

This speech, which concludes the first part of the story, is particularly rich in consonances and assonances similar to those of the Russian proverbs and riddles. Phonetically it sounds thus: *ka-kój na ʎaspad'in'i mund'ir / ta-kój i na xalópi ad'in / sídar da kárp fkalómni' živ'ót / a gr'eɣda b'idá na kavó n'i živ'ót / vadá čevó n'i pajm'ót / a agón' i papá sažž'ot.*

Of the one hundred seventy-seven lines in this section, most are constructed as bipartite syntactic units with final intonational cadence. The rhythm is supported by eighty-five final rhymes and a certain number of assonances in stressed words. This is the usual rhythmic pattern of the Russian "spoken verse" frequently used by Russian storytellers.¹¹

The first part of the story is a complete short tale, the plot of which follows the pattern of that type of fairy tale in which a poor persecuted boy does his best to please his wicked master, but he is mistreated by the master and his servants. A mysterious protector (the unnamed girl-servant) gives him the magic talisman that will free him. He utters the magic words; and having successfully passed through various tests, he returns victorious to the home where he was mistreated and has his tormentors punished.

This story has its parallel in many tales of smart soldiers and clever thieves. The replacement of magic features with realistic ones, and the introduction of realistic details which correspond to the personal experiences of the narrator, are of frequent occurrence in contemporary stories. This peculiarity has been fully described by Azadovskij.¹²

No subtitle separates the second part of the story from the first, but the change

in style of the narrative is evident. Rhymes become rare and the occasional rhythm noticed earlier disappears altogether, to be replaced by ordinary prose. The narrative is also more matter-of-fact, with fewer jokes and circumlocutions, as Kain continues by relating his adventures as a free man: "I entered a *kabak* [saloon] in which I saw my friend Kamčatka and four men."

They commit many robberies together. The girl who helped Kain before now helps them to enter the house and plunder a storeroom. Later he meets this girl again and learns that she had been beaten but had not betrayed him. She is now free and married. He becomes her lover, gives her a rich present, and confesses that he has nowhere to go. She takes him home and induces her husband to offer his protection to Kain. To reward her, and to buy the husband's complicity, Kain steals a tailor's savings and gives them to his hosts. Then he leaves Moscow and takes his gang to different fairs and convents, where they commit several successful thefts, but finally Kain is caught. He escapes and is caught again. He is rescued by Kamčatka, who brings him a loaf of bread in which a master key and money are concealed. At another perilous moment, Kamčatka deserts him and Kain is again caught. He is flogged and set free for lack of evidence. The conversation between thieves is carried out in riddles, proverbs, and in the secret language of peddlers, *ofeni*?. The explanation of the riddles, or translation into ordinary language, is given immediately in the text.

After Kain has been freed, he decides to live quietly for a while, "as the police learned to know us well." He remains in hiding with his gang in a small village. In a few months they join the armed band of the *ataman* [leader], Mixail Zorja, on the Volga river.

At this point begins the third part of the story, which consists of the description of several armed attacks on a government factory and private properties. The band has a regular military organization of the Cossack type. It is worth mentioning that the autobiography was published very soon after the end of Pugačov's rebellion, which started with similar attacks of Cossack bands.

The adventures are told by Kain in the first person, but he now uses the first person plural instead of the first person singular, as in the other parts of the book. Kain is not the main character in these adventures. Kamčatka is the *esaul*, the second in command after the *ataman*, and the initiative is taken by one of these two, not by Kain. The rhymed jokes of this part are ascribed to the *ataman* and to Kamčatka, who saves a woman and accepts dangerous assignments. Kain is given only one assignment at the end of the Volga adventure: he must find lodgings for his friends upon their return to Moscow.

It seems probable that there existed a separate tale, a highwayman epic, of which Kamčatka was the main character, and that later it was added to the story of Kain. There is no historical proof that Kain took part in these adventures along the Volga. From the moment Kain returns to Moscow, Kamčatka and the members of the gang are never mentioned.

Here the style of the narrative changes altogether. Kain speaks again in the first person singular, and in businesslike prose tells how he presented himself to the police and handed over a letter in which he offered his services as an informer and also stated: "I am a thief and I know many thieves." Words are used in this passage which appeared in the authentic confession of the real Kain and in the administrative edicts

following his admission to the ranks of the police. But the story does not follow the true order of events. Kain tells that the chief of police accepted him at once, gave him a drink, ordered him to wear a military coat, and sent him at the head of a company to perform his first raids. A report on different arrests follows in twenty-one numbered paragraphs, together with a description of the technicalities which gave Kain his legal status. There are also two lines about his gambling house. This part could have been composed only by someone who had direct knowledge of the text of official documents.

A break in the story occurs here, and a separate chapter entitled "Kain's wedding" is introduced, forming the fifth part of the tale. (The title is carried in certain editions as "Kain's crazy wedding.") Kain tells that he fell in love with the daughter of a retired sergeant, but that she refused to marry a thief. He proposed again after he became an informer, and again she refused. Then he had her arrested on a false accusation. She was beaten, and he threatened her until she agreed to marry him. The wedding is described as a farce: Kain's papers are forged, and the priest is drunk. (This episode resembles the anecdotes about bad priests which form a special group of Russian folktales.)

The day after the wedding, Kain and his wife extort money from merchants by use of an ancient tradition, according to which the bride during the wedding feast offers food to the guests, who take it and put money on the plate she is handing them. Here the merchants were brought in by force, with the help of Kain's "company," and in exchange for their money the bride gave them handfuls of dry peas.

Kain then tells about the carnival celebrations:

The same year for Carnival I made near the Customhouse a hill for coasting, which was adorned with spruce, wooden statues and red cloth. And all the week there went on many games, because of the number of people. On the last day I gathered about thirty men actors, and ordered them to represent on that hill the play about Tsar Solomon. There also were two jesters. Among other events, money was stolen from this tsar, which was found with a man from the mills, who had been hired by me for that purpose. After he was brought to the tsar he was sentenced to be punished for that theft. For this purpose, about two hundred men were gathered and formed in two rows. Each was given a broom. Having undressed that worker, they put on him a peasant's cap, a necktie around his neck, big mittens on his hands, a small bear was tied to his back. He was made to march between these rows from one end of the hill to the other, while the drum was beating. Volk, a worker of the mills, was directing; acting as a Major, he was riding a horse and forcing the men in the rows to do their job. The above mentioned worker walked six times to and fro. He was beaten until he was all bleeding, and he took from me for that one ruble in money and a new fur coat.

In the apocrypha about Solomon, which were popular in medieval Russia, the rival of Solomon is Kitovras, a monster—half animal, half man. In Western versions the monster, sometimes represented as a jester, is Morolt. The combined influence of both versions produced a legend and folk plays in which the monster, Solomon's rival, robs him of his wife and kingdom and is unmasked and punished by Solomon's faithful army at the very last moment.¹³ We do not possess any texts of the play enacted by Kain's men, but it is probable that the strange dress of the punished worker was a reminiscence of the monster's appearance (fur cap, fur mittens, and

a small bear tied to his back), while the whole scene of the punishment was a parody of the fate which awaited thieves. The parody was intensified by the fact that it was enacted by thieves. A similar scene takes place in a comic tale which was published as a woodcut at about the same period. It is entitled "The cock and hens," and is a parody on judiciary procedures. Administrative language is used in dealing with chickens, and the cock is sentenced to the same punishment as the worker in the play. The rhymes and rhythm of the tale are very close to those of Kain's story.¹⁴

Having told about the carnival celebrations, Kain returns without transition to his activities as a police informer who is at the same time the leader of a gang of thieves. Now and then he plays the role of a "good robber"; he distributes part of the money he has obtained by fraud to the servants of the men he deceived; he helps imprisoned serfs to escape, and handcuffs their guard with their chains; he arrests a would-be arsonist; he helps a nun to rejoin her lover. But he never forgets his own interests and obtains large sums of money for his help. He boasts of many cruel deeds and of wanton attacks on people who happened to be near his field of action. These episodes are in no way connected with each other. Kain's end is told in a very short paragraph in a matter-of-fact way. He "dared to abduct the wife of a police employee," and turned again to the words that had often helped him, *slovo i delo*, but without effect. He was tried and sentenced to death.

Almost every paragraph ends in a joke, many of them repetitions or imitations of former ones. There are very few rhymes, and the rhythmic pattern disappears. At times the narrative becomes ordinary prose.

The end recalls the first joke Kain made, in the office of the secret police, when he pretended not to understand questions and said that he did not know anything about "articles, pounds, weight and overweight." He closes his autobiography with the words, "and was sent to the Cold Waters which are from Moscow seven versts with overweight." The "overweight" (*poxod*) was here over seven hundred versts (about five hundred miles).

There can be no doubt that the autobiography is a compilation of several stories about one man which are, in turn, made up from many anecdotes and short episodes underlined by a joke or a pun. The people who told these stories may have heard them from Kain himself. That the narrator was in contact with members of the administration, or had gone through court trials himself, is evident from his knowledge of courtroom terminology, of the police, and of the names and ranks of different personalities. The tale uses criminal argot and the secret language of peddlers, and introduces proverbs and proverbial phrases as speech idioms, which are an integral part of the story instead of being quotations, as was the common rule in literary production of the period. This feature justifies the assertion made by Komarov, in connection with the manuscript story of Kain's life: "It was written in the language in which people of low rank tell tales and relate their own adventures." It was in the memory of the "people of low rank" (*podlye ljudi*) that Russian oral tradition survived during the eighteenth century, while Russian literature was searching for new roads.

PROVERBS AND PROVERBIAL PHRASES IN THE STORY

1. Drink water as a goose.
2. A coat of the same cloth.

3. The posts are hung with bareness and nakedness.
4. The barns are full of hunger and cold.
5. Singing my old song. (Refers to the frequent usage of *slovo i delo*.)
6. To write with the left hand. (Secretly.)
7. With whom does not sin and mishap live?
8. Fire will burn even a priest. (An allusion to an event in the history of the Russian Church.)
9. We will force him to fish. (To drown someone.)
10. Tap-lap—a storeroom. (Rapid work.)
11. The only way is—out of the gate and into the water. (Hopeless situation.)
12. I am neither a thief nor a robber, yet of the same kind.
13. Stone bag. (Prison.)
14. I have four Thursdays in a week; in the country the month has ten weeks plus one. (I have four lucky days per week, meaning: I work rapidly and successfully, but the circumstances require that I hide in the country where life is quieter.)
15. The barn is burning and the threshers ask for dinner. (Necessity to bribe.)
16. Watch the flight of the sea-gulls. (Fisherman's adage, here meaning: wait for the right moment.)
17. Trade is a pit; stand straight. (The prison for debts was called the "Pit.")
18. A knocked up dish lives two centuries (or two lives). (There is a variant in which "knocked up" is replaced by "chipped." In the story, the word for "knocked up"—*školočennaja*—is used with a double meaning, because the verb *školotit'* 'to knock together, to knock up,' is very close to *kolotit'* 'to beat.')
19. Have your fill of mushrooms, and keep your tongue behind your teeth. (Kain is buying a man's silence.)
20. A priest's onion, all peeled and ready. (A rich present.)

All but one of these phrases is introduced into the story as idiomatic speech; only No. 18 is used as a quotation, in order to bring forth an excuse for Kain's cruelty. The story also uses many parts of proverbs to build jokes, puns, and circumlocutions which remind one of the double meaning of certain proverbs and riddles. The rhythmic and phonetic patterns of proverbs and riddles are followed in the text which surrounds them.

VAN'KA KAIN AND FOLKSONGS

While the adventures of Kain were thus stabilized in a printed autobiography, which told the story of a legendary master-thief with the halo of a highwayman and protector of the poor, another image of him was being created through songs.

In 1779 a collection of forty-seven songs was added by Komarov to his biography of Kain. After that songs were published with almost every edition, varying in number and selection. The titles of Kain's story announced their presence in differing ways: "Kain's songs," "Kain's favorite songs," "Songs sung by Kain," and so forth. Almost all of these songs had been published before, books of songs being very popular at that time. Some are genuine folksongs, but the collections also included contemporary variations on ancient themes, creations in the sentimental genre that was popular in the eighteenth century, and miscellaneous material contemporary not of Kain but of the publication of the story.¹⁶

The first song in the collection is usually the lament of a highwayman complaining that "a new informer called and surnamed Van'ka Kainov" stops the highwaymen's boats and requires them to show "printed," i.e., authentic, passports. The best known of the songs is *Ne šumi, mati zelënaja dubravuška* 'Do not rustle, mother green forest . . .,' introduced by Pushkin in his short novel, "The Captain's Daughter," where it is sung by Pugačov's men. This song was attributed to Kain, and it appeared with the subtitle "Song of the well-known Kain, which he sang on the eve of his trial," in a collection published in 1818.

Before Kain's story was published, there appeared in a collection of songs one which described how he kidnapped an innocent young girl, but this was not included in the selections which accompanied the story. His story was usually followed by a gamblers' song—a parody on a Masonic hymn—in which his name is listed with those of such celebrated outlaws as the Cossack leader Sten'ka Razin, the heretic Andriushka (arrested by Kain), and that of another contemporary robber. All are presented as arch-criminals.

In 1815 the story of Kain was published with the story of Sten'ka Razin; and in the second half of the nineteenth century a folksong was recorded in which Van'ka Kain appeared as the *esaul* 'second in command' of Sten'ka Razin. In another song belonging to the Razin cycle, in which the chief character is Razin's son, Kain also figures as a comrade of Razin.¹⁶

There also circulated a prose tale which relates that Ermak was conquering Siberia together with Sten'ka Razin, Van'ka Kain, Ivan Mazepa, and Grigorij Otrep'ev, when he decided to go to Moscow to ask the tsar for mercy and offer him Siberia. The tale moves into the rhythm of a historical song: "Spoke Ermak, the radiant son of Timothy: / 'I came to thee, Terrible Tsar, / With my comrade, with Van'ka Kain. . . .'"¹⁷ The joining in one historical moment of these five names is an anachronism: Ermak belongs to the sixteenth century, Otrep'ev to the beginning of the seventeenth, Razin to the second half of the seventeenth, Mazepa to the beginning of the eighteenth, and Kain to the middle of the eighteenth century. But at particular moments they were all enemies of the state. Of the five, only Ermak and Kain offered their services to the administration. Oral tradition must have remembered this when it chose Kain to be the companion of Ermak on his journey. In fact, Ermak did not go to Moscow personally; he sent an embassy.

There are no indications that the real Kain ever composed a song or attained fame as a singer. The autobiography does not mention it. The police records state that while in prison Kain gambled, drank, and sang with his friends, but they do not single him out as a performer of songs. Yet his reputation as a singer of and as a composer of songs stuck to the Kain of the legend, and finally was transferred to the historical Kain. When G. Gennadi in 1950 published a reprint of one of the oldest texts of Kain's autobiography without songs, because there had been no songs in the original edition, he was severely criticized by folklorists of the period. In our time another feature of the legendary Kain has been emphasized by writers and critics of the Soviet Union—the "protector of the poor" side, which has been applied to the real Kain together with the role of a leader of social rebellion, although this is definitely in contradiction to the life and adventures of Ivan Osipov, nicknamed Kain, as recorded in the archives of the Moscow police.

NOTES

¹ D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature* (New York, 1949), p. 38.

² V. Sipovskij, *Iz istorii russkogo romana i povesti, Materialy po bibliografii, istorii i teorii russkogo romana* (Petersburg, 1903), and "Van'ka Kain," *Izvestija Otdela Russkogo Jazyka i Slovesnosti Akademii Nauk* (1902), 98, 120.

³ *Istorija slavnogo vora, razbojnika i byvshego moskovskogo syščika Van'ki Kaina so vseimi ego obstoitel'stvami, raznymi ljubimymi pesnjami i portretom* (anon., n.d., n.p.), Harvard College Library, No. 27232.103.

⁴ V. Traxtenberg, *Blatnaja Muzyka* (Petersburg, 1908).

⁵ G. Esipov, "Van'ka Kain," *Iz podlinnykh bumag Sysknogo prikaza, Os'mnadcatyj vek* (Moscow, 1869) III, 280-342; P. Bessonov, *Pesni, sobrannye P. Kireevskim* (Moscow, 1872), IX; D. Mordovcev, "Van'ka Kain," *Drevnjaja i Novaja Rossija*, III (1876).

⁶ Matvej Komarov, *Obstoitel'nye i vernye istorii dvux mošennikov: pervogo rossijskogo slavnogo vora Van'ki Kaina*, 3rd ed. (Petersburg, 1794). Komarov (1732-1812?) was born a serf, served as butler and caretaker, and finally obtained his freedom. He published poems, collections of tales and historical documents, and attained fame as the author (or compiler) of "The tale of the adventures of the English Lord George," the most popular Russian chapbook, published many times throughout the 19th century. On Komarov, see V. Sklovskij, *Matvej Komarov, žitel' goroda Moskvy* (Leningrad, 1929).

⁷ M. Azadovskij, *Literatura i Folklor* (Leningrad, 1939), p. 222.

⁸ The same anonymously written biography of Cartouche was translated by Daniel Defoe: *The life and actions of Lewis Dominique Cartouche, who was broke alive on the wheel at Paris Nov. 28, 1721* (London, 1722).

⁹ The Russian word *podlyj*, which now means "base, mean, foul," meant in the 18th century "low rank, low birth." It did not imply serfdom and could be applied to a free man. A man born *v podlosti* could aspire to higher rank, and some attained it.

¹⁰ S. Bromlej, "Jasnopoljanskij govor po malogramotnoj zapisi," *Materialy i issledovanija po russkoj dialektologii* (Moscow, 1949), I.

¹¹ R. Jakobson, "Studies in Comparative Slavic Metrics," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* (Oxford, 1952), III, 35.

¹² Above, n. 7. See also Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York, 1931), pp. 451-453.

¹³ A. Veselovskij, *Slavjanskije skazanija o Solomone i Kitovrase i zapadnye legendy o Morol'fe i Merline* (Petersburg, 1872); P. Bessonov, *Pesni, sobrannye P. N. Rybnikovym* (Moscow, 1862), II, Intro.

¹⁴ D. Rovinskij, *Russkie narodnye kartinki, Sbornik otd. Russ. Jaz. i Slov* (Petersburg, 1881), I, 232-239.

¹⁵ A. Sobolevskij, *Velikoruskie narodnye pesni* (Petersburg, 1895-1902), I-VII.

¹⁶ V. Miller, *Istoričeskie pesni russkogo naroda* (Petersburg, 1915), p. 743, No. 323.

¹⁷ Bessonov (above, n. 13), pp. 230-231.

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HARVEST FESTIVALS AMONG CZECHS AND SLOVAKS IN AMERICA

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THE calendar year lends itself to associations with the human course from birth to death. Agrarian rites, centered around the two equinoxes and the two solstices, to a certain degree belong in each phase to a different generation. Children have primacy in the winter and early spring customs, then successively the adolescents and young adults in the spring and summer, the mature people in the fall, and finally the old men and women at the time of the winter solstice, immediately succeeded by the youngsters again. In my inquiry into the calendar rites of the Czechoslovak immigrants in America, three facts determined my decision to focus upon the fall ritual: it belongs to the mature people, those who are married and who assume the principal responsibility for the community. It is a ritual in which both men and women are equally involved and in which, besides the main actors, all the generations play some part, since the whole village actually participates in the harvesting work, followed by the festivities. It climaxes the agricultural efforts of the year and, since the welfare of the village depends upon the outcome of the harvest, the ritual merriment has a rational justification for the people. The majority of my native informants in America were of peasant origin. Most of those who are now mature and married experienced the harvest ritual in their childhood or youth at home and, had they not emigrated, would now be playing leading parts in it. Here they are the most vital representatives of their ethnic group and the principal organizers of its social activities.

The "Sixteenth Moravian Day" took place in Chicago in 1954. This meeting of all the Moravian societies in America and Canada was organized by their Chicago Central Association. "Cultivate your folklore" was the slogan of the festival, and "Lord preserve for us the heritage of our ancestors" was its solemn conclusion. The Americans and Canadians of Moravian origin gathered in the park of the Pilsen Brewing Company, and the lapel cards carrying the names of Moravian villages indicated their societies. On the open-air platform, under the title "Our Youth in Game and Dance," the calendar rituals were performed: the Carnival Sword Dance, the Expulsion of Death, the Easter Whipping Ceremony, the Raising of the May Tree, the Ride of the Kings, the Harvest Celebration, and the Feasts which follow in honor of the Patron Saint of the village. They took six hours; despite the July heat, attention mounted steadily and every item was frenetically applauded. The performance and the ritual songs have been learned within each of the actively participating societies or in the local ethnic schools. Both memory and ethnographic books were relied on for that purpose. Traditional costumes as well as the ritual props were made at home. Morena, the Death effigy, was dug out at the last moment before the performance from a cellar in Berwyn, where it had been stored since the last Moravian Day a year

before. The horses for the Ride of the Kings were rented at considerable expense to the Association. A dance lasted until the late hours.

A few years earlier I had visited the harvest celebration of the New York society "Moravan," which took place in Sokol Hall, the cultural and social center of the Czechs in Manhattan. It was announced by a poster on the street as "Harvest Celebration." People were already dancing, and as I was looking for some characteristic harvest decoration, the treasurer of the society pointed to a wreath on the ceiling. "It is small, but have you ever tried to get grain ears and field flowers in this country? Our farmers from Canada had to send them to us. In any case, it is not relevant. The important thing is that it is called a 'Harvest Celebration,' because it attracts people. Once here, they dance and forget what it is."

The fall ritual at the Chicago meeting was performed in the summer, but its order within the sequence of other calendar rites was preserved. As to the harvest dance of the New York "Moravan," it was organized annually towards harvesting time, but besides the indication on the poster, hardly anything else referred to the ritual. Many other harvest celebrations which I saw performed by the Czechs and Slovaks in America have led me to classify these two as extreme instances and to choose three others which I thought typical both for their intrinsic features illustrating the gradual changing of the ritual and for the social setting of each performing group. The harvest ritual "at home" will serve us as a point of comparison.

Among the numerous versions of the harvest ritual which my native informants gave me, as they remembered it from their home country, there were regional variants as well as modifications reflecting urban influence. The essential elements, however, were always the same; and they were in agreement with the ethnographic records made in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, and with testimonies not only from modern times but also from three or four centuries ago. For our purposes, a short summary will suffice.

Peasants help each other to harvest the crop, and in feudal times the whole village—used to gather in the master's fields. The reapers call the last handful of standing grain "wolf," "goat," or "hare," and the same names are given to those who cut it. It is said that they ride on the "goat" or "wolf," and if the rider is a girl, ditties are sung about her riding on the "tail." Special reaping and harvesting songs, most of them with a mating motif, are sung during the work. Should the landowner, manager, or any passing stranger come to the fields, the women reapers bind his legs or whole body with straw bands. The last sheaf is called "old woman" or "old man." It is usually dressed in old woman's clothing, but if it is "old man," in the clothing of the landowner. Also the old woman might be dressed in the sheaf, or she might carry the sheaf on her back. The girls make a big wreath of the ears of all kinds of grain and of the field flowers, and two of them carry it in the procession. The youngest one has a wreath on her head. The men reapers put wreaths on their heads, decorate their scythes and rakes with grain ears or a red handkerchief, and carry special poles and sticks with wreaths and red handkerchiefs on top. The landowner, farmer, or the youngest boy reaper carry the same decorated pole or a simple green twig; but in their case it is called "flag" and the one who carries it is the "flag-bearer." The "old woman" is put on a decorated wagon where women surround it, singing "women reapers are going home, they lead a white goat." The men, their faces often blackened,

walk by their side. They are awaited at the house of the master, landowner, or farmer, or any man chosen to represent the authorities, be it the mayor or, in our times, the Communist administrative official. There they are welcomed, and the wife of the landowner sprinkles the leading girl with water or liquor "in order that the grain will be clean," and she in turn places her wreath on the landowner's head. The reapers then sing to both of them: "As many pines in the forests, so many cows, / as many trees in the forests, so many oxen, / as many sparrows in the world, so many sons, / as many goose-feathers, so many daughters." They are offered food and drink, they dance around the couple, and the landowner hangs his wreath from the ceiling in the corner of the room, or in the stable. The reapers go on dancing inside the big wreath, around and with the "old woman" whom they eventually mock, push, beat and thrash, drown, or burn. In modern times they put it into the threshing machine. Then they struggle for the remnants of the straw or for its ashes, which, during the winter holidays, they will spread on the floor, on the table, on the fields and around the trees.

When asked, my native informants were unable to interpret the meaning of the ritual, in particular of its climax. "We use the oldest grain to make the 'old woman'; what else would we do with it?" Indeed, they had not read about the deities of agriculture, the grain god Osiris and the grain mother Demeter, or about the divine king Dionysos sacrificed in the shape of a goat. They had heard no legends about the vegetation god who must die to renew life, nor did they have any superstition explicitly concerning the vegetation spirit that dwells in the grain. They would meet any effort to make them explain the content with a non-cooperative attitude: "I don't know. I never thought about it. Who knows what it means?" However, what they resisted formulating as spectators, they readily viewed as participants, bringing into relief the reiterative quality of the ritual in terms of tradition, the inertia of collective habit and social code. "We have always done it. This is how it always was. Our ancestors did it, so we do it too. My grandmother did it every year, why shouldn't I?" And they emphasized its ordained character: "It must be so." Eagerly, they would shift attention to the individual episodes, which they would describe with relish, clarity of mind, and in minute detail, referring, however, to their emotional attitudes whenever asked to interpret the symbols. "We do it because it is fun. We always think about the cattle, why shouldn't they get the wreath also, they must have their fun too, the cows, isn't that so?" The final rejoicing at the "killing of the 'old woman'" they would connect with the successful outcome of the harvest: "We do it because we don't worry any more. The people feel that they have enough to eat the whole year, that's why we do it." The decorated poles, sticks, and tools are carried "to show that there is harvest," and the wreaths and bouquets of grain ears and field flowers illustrate "what there is in the fields." The wreath of the youngest girl is hung in the corner of the room "because it looks pretty there," or "there isn't any other place to put it," and "it has always been so."

According to the standard responses of my native informants to the same parts of the ritual, there are, on the one hand, scenes and objects which are "fun," and on the other hand, those which are decorative or serve to illustrate the harvest. This differentiation which they make is relevant for the analysis of the ritual.

Within the category of "fun" there are a few typical variants whose common

denominator is a metaphorical device of substitution. When the last sheaf is called "old woman," each of two pairs of opposites merge into one unit: the animate and inanimate, and the masculine (sheaf is masculine in Czech) and feminine. The core of the symbolism is the theme of decay, barrenness, and the proximity of death. Of the two correlative images (the sheaf and the "old woman"), the latter might be embodied only in the name, or also either partly materialized, as when the sheaf is dressed in old woman's clothes, or fully so, if an old woman is put into the sheaf. Finally, both images might be merely juxtaposed—the sheaf is carried by an old woman on her back. When the last sheaf is dressed as an "old woman" and then is called "white goat," a double animistic transfiguration occurs through cumulation of metaphors: one, anthropomorphic, achieved materially; the other, zoomorphic, performed verbally. When the girl reaper touches the last standing grain, called "wolf," she will share this name, so that the common verbal symbol refers to two different entities, emphasizing thus their common attribute—the vitality and fertility of the girl and of the still-standing grain. At the same time, the name "wolf" in this metaphoric use merges the inanimate with the animate, the animal with the human, and not only masculine with feminine but directly male with female. When the girl cuts the last standing grain, the imaginary "wolf" gives place to the synecdochic trope of the girl "riding on the 'tail,'" through which there arises an identification not only of the two objects (grain and tail) but also of an agricultural and an erotic act.

The symbolism of such primary images as the last sheaf is patent. It is either expressed verbally or by material confrontation of the two correlatives. These symbols are unanimously characterized as "fun" by the native informants: "We dance with the 'old woman,' we thrash her and keep the straw." The more images are intermitted at the same time, the greater "thrill" is felt by the performers: the sheaf is the "old woman" and is also the "white goat."

Although the participants are unable to extract from the ritual its total meaning—or, rather, just because such an extraction is tabooed—they intuit the spiritual principle of the action without being able to rationalize it, just as a speech community is aware of verbal mechanisms without being able to abstract this knowledge from the concrete verbal behavior. They discern the crucial points within their enactment, and such scenes as the "cutting of the 'wolf'" or the "killing of the 'old woman'" evoke in them a most hilarious response, an intense emotional catharsis. Theirs is actually the joy over life and fecundity ensuing from the death of the scapegoat and, their merriment shared by all, it is in this communion that the participants find the intrinsic meaning of the ritual. They realize the connection between the "killing" and the new fertility with one significant limitation, namely, that the effect (*causa finalis*) is interpreted as cause: "Having enough to eat, we kill the 'old woman'" instead of "Killing her, we have enough to eat." Thus in this exegesis the fundamentally magic sacrifice becomes a Thanksgiving feast.

Heightstown is a small community near Trenton, New Jersey, on the route to Washington, D. C. About fifteen years ago, a few Slovaks and Moravians began to settle on farms there, and now there are forty or fifty such families spread about the area. Most of them originally came from remote villages in the Carpathian mountains where, in their early youth, they worked as laborers on other people's

property and had little opportunity to go to school or to learn a trade. Unskilled when they came to America, they took any available jobs and became handy-men, cleaners, miners, and factory workers. The girls worked as housemaids in the homes of American families situated on the outskirts of their ethnic clusters, or took jobs in nearby factories until they married. Most of them wanted to return to the soil, however, and as soon as they saved some money, invested it in a farm. The first years they had their hands full farming and did not meet often. But in 1945 a Slovak couple celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary, and on that occasion some sixty guests danced and sang in the couple's long trailer garage. There they got the idea that they should organize a club in which the members would meet to discuss farming matters and also hold social gatherings. They went to their minister in Trenton to ask him how to go about it and what name to give the club. "Today, the laws say that we are a Social and Cultural Club of American-Czechoslovak farmers in Heightstown, New Jersey, with the subtitle that we cultivate Czechoslovak customs, songs and dances as well as *American literature*. . . . We had to add that."

"People didn't go to New York and were hungry for entertainment." At every meeting the garage was overcrowded. There they had picnics, danced, celebrated May Day and Carnival. Soon they got together three thousand dollars and bought a wooded area. "What to do with an empty woods? We will build. But where to get the money? Mr. Porubský and Mr. Melichárek ran the whole thing; they were older and knew how to persuade people. They canvassed the area in their cars and sold shares. When the clubhouse was being built, people worried; when they saw it completed: 'Gee, that's nice.'" They wondered how to dedicate it and wanted to do something "that would attract and bring many people together. Something new. Mr. Melichárek, who had seen more of the world than anyone else—he used to be a farmhand—drew an idea from his head: a mock-wedding. He must have seen something like that at home, but in this part of the country no one had ever heard about it before. Perhaps in New York." And so they rehearsed it. "No ceremony, no ritual, just a march from the school, as if it were the church, to the club. We had best men and bridesmaids. The bride, a girl who had recently arrived from Slovakia, and the bridegroom, a Slovak from New York, presented a program of solos. When we were marching, dancing, and singing, with the musicians in front, the people in town didn't know what was going on—"Those people must be going crazy." The club made a thousand dollars from it. The girl who represented the bride and her bridegroom later really did get married. They didn't have a big wedding. No one knew about it." Then they had another idea: "A Harvest Home Dance, as they call it in America." This was the idea of Jožka Nekarda, at that time president of the entertainment branch of the club.

When I first met Nekarda, at the Slovak Maypole celebration at Staten Island, New York, a second Harvest Home Dance was already in preparation in Heightstown. He invited me to be his guest and to take part in the celebration. I came a day early to help them. As I was painting Harvest posters, the Nekardas told me about their lives.

Jožka Nekarda is perhaps the only Moravian and Catholic in a Slovak Lutheran group. His mother died when he was two years old, and his father died eight years later. He was left with two teen-age sisters and four small brothers. The girls and

boys took care of the farm, and Jožka went to school, took care of the cattle, and cooked for them all. He was too small to take part in the life of the village, but he used to go caroling at Christmas with the other children. Once he saw the older boys raising a May Tree, and during the war they all would go to the cross behind the village to pray.

At thirteen he followed his sister to America. She married in Omaha and he was to help on her farm, but she soon sent him away to work as a farmhand. There were many Czechs there and good soil. The work was hard, but the people were nice, and he got enough to eat. There were no trees. Everything was still done in the old way: they used horses and ploughs, sheaves, and even flails. The people had enough time and didn't go to work in a factory if they had a farm. But they didn't have any celebrations; no Carnival, no caroling, no May Tree, no Harvest. There was a church seventeen miles away from the village where Czech, Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian, and other services were held. People went there on Sundays, with each group waiting its turn. Jožka used to sing to them, "When I was leaving my country, everybody cried," and those who listened to him cried, too. He did not learn any English there.

Later, he joined his brothers in New York. They told him that it was easier to make money there, and he worked as a mason and a gardener. They lived together in a cottage on Long Island, economized, and when one of them returned home, he bought a farm and was able to afford schooling for his four children. Once the brothers said they were going to a vintage. He thought they were going to pick grapes in a vineyard, but they went to the Sokol Hall in New York and danced. He hadn't learned much about such customs at home. In the Slovak singing society he met Anna, a subtle, urban-looking girl, and they married in 1929.

Anna was born in America of Slovak parents. When she was five years old, she was taken to their native village, Vrbovce. Her father had a farm there and substituted for the local school teacher. When his brothers divided the farm among them and nothing was left for him, he had to work hard again. He was never a strong worker and liked to read. He went to Canada and brought his family over when Anna was thirteen. He never made much money, and Anna started to earn her living as a housemaid in New York two years later. She used to read a lot and sang in the Slovak singing society. She wanted to marry "not a white-collar clerk, who is not interesting, but a strong-minded man, a labor man, a real man, a worker, and that is Jožka." She was never a "peasant girl" and always wished to become a school teacher. Today she would rather speak English than Slovak, and would rather sing popular, city songs than folksongs. But she "would never have married Jožka if he hadn't sung so well. No one in the community knows as many folksongs as he, and no one does the caroling around the farms at Christmas as well as he does. The longer he is in America, the more he becomes attached to the old customs. When, in 1939, Czechoslovakia was occupied, he came home, threw himself on his bed and cried." She never knew that he loved his homeland so much.

They bought the farm during the war, and Jožka also works at General Electric in Trenton. They didn't have anything, but now they have "machines, an electric refrigerator, a car, a modern stove, and two children. My whole life I used to wander as a vagabond among strangers, and only now I have returned to them," he says, referring to his Slovak farming community in Heightstown.

Plans were being made for the harvest celebration. "There will be two rented trucks. People in costumes will be peasants, and go in the second truck; the others will dress as farmers and go on the first. You know, it is a small town and people are sensitive . . . America first. I will dress as a farmer and perhaps take the big hat of an American farmer. The peasants will go behind as if they were only accompanying the farmers to the dance. The sheaves and wreathes will be bought from a dealer in Trenton—here they cut the grain differently, only the ears, and leave the straw standing in the fields. We will start at the other end of town as if there were fields. We will go slowly through the town as if it were a village, to the club-house, as if it were a farm. There the Porubskýs will await us with drinks and food. They will be the landowners; they are the oldest among us and they are here thirty years already. Someone should write about it in the newspapers so that the other people would know what it is. It is not easy to go through the whole town. They might throw tomatoes at us. Or perhaps the Ukrainians and Poles will think that it is something political. . . ." Anna Nekarda joined in at this point: "No one can harm us. No one can do anything to us. We are supposed to . . . we signed to do it . . . to cultivate the old customs." Later she told me, "I will not go on the truck. I don't feel like it. It is not sincere. I don't feel like one of them. It is an imitation, do you know what I mean?"

The next day we were standing on the outskirts of Heightstown, waiting. In each truck there were about forty people with scythes, rakes, and forks in their hands. There were also sheaves, wreathes, samples of grain, ribbons, green twigs and accordions. The peasants and farmers were discussing what songs to sing when they went through the center of town. Should it be the American "Old MacDonald had a farm, quack, quack, quack? . . . then there should be ducks and pigs on the truck also, but the ducks are not harvested . . ." The hour struck and the procession moved on. I was asked to join the young people in the first car behind the trucks. The young president of the entertainment branch of the club, who was supposed to organize the celebration together with the parents, was driving. As soon as we started, the boys hurriedly pulled down the curtains, huddled together, choked with laughter and embarrassment: "The people in town know us and we don't want them to see us here." "How could my mother ever go on the truck, and so madly dressed?" The young president was pale and tight-lipped. "I didn't want it this way at all . . . it slipped out of my hands," he said to me almost apologetically. The songs grew louder as we neared the town. I opened the window. The ribbons flew, the songs became solemn, and I saw Jožka in front, waving his hat in the air. His voice was leading. However, there was no one in the streets. It was a hot Sunday noon in Indian Summer. The people didn't open their windows to look, nor did the few pedestrians turn or wave. We were already in the Negro quarter and there they looked at us lazily without even a smile. From the town on, we went faster and faster through the fields to the forest. At the club someone took pictures of the "peasants" and the "farmers" with their sheaves, wreaths, and tools. Then we went inside where the "landowners" were waiting. An old ritual song was sung to wish them well, while some were helping me to place my recording machine so that they would all be heard on it. They were delighted. The Porubskýs served drinks and a cake, and we danced until morning. Jožka, though he was exuberant with joy, kept repeating to

me, "We should have announced it in the newspapers . . . we should have announced it."

The harvest celebration in Heightstown was intended as an imitation of the corresponding ritual in a Slovak village. The people would frequently refer to its non-authentic character by calling it a mock-performance, and would stress its formal likeness with the original: "the way we always did it."

In the reminiscences of the Slovak farmers, however, the ritual was inseparable from its authentic surroundings and bearers. Consequently the outskirts were to be imagined as fields, the town as a village, and the clubhouse as a farm. In order to represent the feudal village society, the people in costumes were "the peasants," and the oldest couple "the landowner and his wife." Those without traditional outfits were conceived as "farmers." In the front, a plain sheaf was placed at Jožka's side. It had lost its customary metaphoric association with the "old woman," and, like the other paraphernalia, assumed a merely metonymic status. The sheaf, the bouquet of the last grain, and the wreaths, as well as the tools and costumes, signified allegiance of the participants to their peasant past.

With the elimination of the "old woman," the composition of the mock-performance changed substantially. The "peasants" and the "farmers" merely went on the truck singing a potpourri from the general stock of Slovak folksongs instead of the specific harvesting songs, and the climax of the action shifted from the "killing of the 'old woman'" to the collective partaking of the harvest food and drink at the "landowner's farm."

Imitating the model, the Heightstown Slovaks transformed it; and all their unintentional modifications converged towards the same end: the agricultural constituents and symbols of the ritual were weakened in favor of the socially communal manifestations. The arrangement of the mock-performance reveals a latent conflict in the peasant tradition of the Heightstown Slovaks, with the victory of this tradition as an emotional outcome of their action: "I felt more at home than ever when singing on the truck," confessed Jožka, and everyone joyfully corroborated his statement. The participants experienced a collective identification with the ancestral society, and the celebration planned as a mock-performance ended in giving them an actual belief by enhancing their ethnic cohesion. Those who did not take an active part remained untouched, indifferent, and even ironical.

"We present drama, comedies, musicals and operas," says Standa Mizerovský, the semi-professional stage director of the Czech and Slovak theatrical world on Manhattan's East Side. "We don't care much for the operas; they have too much singing. We like something where one talks, sings, and dances, something nice; we are simple people, you know. We like best the comedies. We take an old play and make a success of it. We cut it in half and insert some old custom, a wedding or a carnival, with songs and dances, in national costumes. Sometimes we make the songs ourselves, Mr. Tůma, the pianist, and I, so it is almost a musical, but we cannot call it that because someone could have seen the play before and would know it is not a musical. The songs are always successful. We try to arrange them for a big chorus so that many people and children can take part. This is the secret of a successful play; those who come to see it want to have someone they know on the stage. The first genera-

tion has the greatest demand for plays from the village life in the old country. For the second generation it does not matter what the play is about. Today there are many more Slovaks on Manhattan than Czechs, and so there are also three times as many Slovak plays performed each year than Czech ones. The Slovaks have always been better actors than the Czechs anyhow, and they listen and obey when they are told how to play. Also, whenever a Slovak play is given, there is such a crowd that we start at 5:00 instead of at 3:00 P.M., and the street is full of cars from Manhattan, Yonkers, New Jersey, Long Island, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania."

The plays are organized by the entertainment branches of the Czech and Slovak cultural and benefit societies. One of them is the "Vrbovce Circle" (*Vrbouvčanský krúžok*), whose members come from Vrbovce, a Slovak mountain village on the Moravian border; Sam Černek is its president.

Today there are allegedly over two thousand people from Vrbovce in the Pennsylvania mines and in New York. They are those who have stayed. There were others, like the married men who came for three years and bought a farm after they returned, or the girls who came to America just to make some money for their dowries. Between the two wars there was someone going to the United States every week. They didn't even stop to see the capital of their country, but went directly to the German harbor and to New York. The *Vrbouvčanský krúžok* has been a sort of branch village for them. It used to have its own orchestra with two violins, a clarinet, bass, and cymbals, which played at weddings, carnivals, picnics, national celebrations, and dances. Its dance group performed at the International Exhibition in New York and was asked to dance for television. But many of the members got married outside of New York, and the cymbalist died. The greatest part of the profit from the various activities was sent back home. Until 1928 the village had thatched roofs. Now it has tile, six new schools, twenty-five teachers, a new city hall, a fire station and a community barn; the streets are asphalted and the brook has a concrete bed; electricity and a telephone system have been installed, a library organized, and an orphanage supported, all by American money from Vrbovce people.

Beneath the tile roofs, the traditional life of the village has not changed. When anyone marries, the men go on horseback dressed in women's clothes, and when people die, a metal coin and bread are put into their coffins. On St. Lucia's Day, masked men in white robes go from window to window to frighten the women; on St. Nicholas' Day, women dress as St. Nicholas, as angels and as devils, and make the rounds of the village. At Christmas, each peasant walks out to his fields and sows poppy seed on the snow; if the weather is too bad, he throws the seed out on his own yard, as if he were sowing it. The women fill a straw basket with all the grain from the year's harvest, with fruit and garlic, and feed the cattle and the poultry. Poppy seed, honey, and cabbage are served on Christmas Eve, and the children and local gypsies go caroling. If, on the next morning, an unknown woman stops at the door, the housewife throws salt on her in order to keep evil away from the family. At Carnival, four young men perform the sword dance with metal skewers on which, as a reward, they collect from house to house bacon and smoked meat. In the evening the old people bury the Carnival at the inn: they put an old bass dressed in rags in a coffin, add some liquor, and pretend to cry in a funeral procession. During the first days of spring, little girls carry a birch tree into the village, turning in the direction

of the sun; at Easter time, the boys come to visit the girls and whip them with willow whips and sprinkle them with water. The May tree is made out of the tallest tree that can be found on the mountain; a small pine tree and a big cock-feather are attached to its top, while at its foot a bottle containing liquor is placed. At harvest time, a special celebration takes place. A procession of wagons comes from the fields into the village. On the first wagon there are samples of all the grain from the fields, and a sheaf with a boy and a girl standing on either side; on the second there is compost, on the third, hay. Then follows an allegorical wagon with Serfdom representing the old times, Freedom the Czechoslovak Republic. Behind all this come the harvesters and the agrarian youth on bicycles. After the ceremony at the landowner's house, a political speech is given on the village green, and then all proceed to the forest for a picnic and dancing.

When Sam Černek left for America, the village had almost 4,000 inhabitants, of whom two-thirds were Lutheran. On his mother's side his family were made freemen and given immunity from military service. Having been chosen from among the country boys, he got a fellowship to study at the agronomic school and was to become an organizer and speaker for the Agrarian Party. He had the chance to prove his oratorical gift and wit in a joke contest at the Vrbovce City Hall, which he won with 327 jokes, drinking and eating in between. He also performed the best man function at weddings, which required memory, improvisatory talent, and social abilities. When he decided to leave, he was twenty-three years old and was working for an insurance company. With the company compensation he came to America with more money than he has now, and he meant to stay a short time.

He had a trade and "trade means bread in America": he knew how to cook and bake. He learned this skill from his mother, whose fame as a good cook made her indispensable at any wedding in Vrbovce or thereabouts. Later he became the manager of a small inn in downtown Greenwich Street, where, at that time, many Slovaks lived. While both he and his wife were working hard in the restaurant, he organized the political and social life of his people. He trained the thirty-six pairs of dancers and took part in all the Slovak weddings as best man. His place in the neighborhood of the Manhattan skyscrapers became a center of Slovak festivities, but when the whole quarter was torn down a few years ago, the inn disappeared and the Slovaks were dispersed.

Three years ago at Easter time, Černek came to visit a Slovak family in Manhattan, and there I met him for the first time. With a willow whip he was to perform the traditional whipping of the women and to get painted eggs from them in return. Every year he makes this visit to his numerous friends in New York and vicinity. "There wouldn't be any Easter without it." Later, however, he told me, referring to the ceremonial whipping, "It is nothing. It is in name only. It is to commemorate that in our country we used to whip the Christ. It is not real. You should have seen our theater. We played the Harvest. It was called *The Peasant from the Golden Farm*, and there was everything. It was exactly like at home. I was the landowner. God, it was beautiful!"

The play was performed again the following fall. The dramatis personae in the production included the landowner, his wife and nephew; a poor peasant and his daughter; the priest, mayor, and innkeeper; the night-watchman and the policeman;

the matchmaker; a maid; first, second, and third neighbors; farm-hands, maidservants, and musicians. The orchestra was to play during and after the performance. The curtain rose, and on the stage there was a Slovak village: a peasant house at the left with a high gable and a red geranium in a small window; a tree was at the right, and in the background were mountains covered with forests and a light blue sky. A cock crowed; it was morning. It was just like home, and beautiful, I thought. The plot developed rapidly, and the second act started with the harvest celebration. The stage was crowded with peasants and their children. The reapers came from the fields with a sheaf and a wreath, with wreaths on their heads and tools in their hands. They sang the ritual song for the landowner and his wife, who stood in front of their house, ate the ritual cake, and drank the liquor which was offered to them. They danced around the sheaf and the landowner couple and sang many harvesting songs. The impression of gaiety was successfully produced and the scene was applauded. The landowner was exuberant; his improvised jokes were especially rewarded with outbursts of laughter from the audience.

The three sets which Jožka Nekarda projected by imagination on the outskirts of Heightstown, on the town and the clubhouse, were realized in the play in one single décor. The peasantry, which he had brought into the mock-performance as impersonal bearers of the ritual, now obtained specific differentiated roles reflecting the social structure of a village and the human relationships within it. They were concrete *dramatis personae* whose action became self-sufficient, reducing the ritual to the scene at the landowner's house. The sheaf as well as the reapers changed to mere accessories which contributed to the rural picture centered around the role of the landowner. The ancestral society, which in the mock-performance was the dominant feature of the participants' spiritual experience, became a subject of the play, as was specifically announced in the subtitle: "An image of village life."

The same state of illusion which permits the participants of the harvest ritual to see in the sheaf intermittently both the sheaf and the "old woman" enabled the spectators of the staged harvest celebration to see the actors intermittently as mere imitators and as actual performers of a genuine ritual. Consequently, since the stage ceremony was experienced by the spectators as real collective ritual, it called for an active part in the performance. We observed a conversion of spectators into participants: "It was like at home, and we sang and danced until late at night."

The house of the gymnastic society "Sokol" (Falcon) in Detroit was built in the eighties. Since then, the Bohemian and Moravian Czechs have been carried away by the continuous waves of residential mobility which shift the ethnic groups one after the other, according to their economic progress, across the Detroit plain; and today, the black Americans who inhabit what was once the Czech quarter, observe with curiosity the reading and discussing, the athletic training, the celebrating, dancing, and singing Slavs. There is hardly a Czech in the town who does not belong to the "Sokol," and the society itself is a member of the American Sokol Federation, which in turn is a branch of the parent society in the home country. Their slogan "Neither profit nor glory" speaks for its ethos. "A man, perfect physically, spiritually and morally, of a firm and noble character, whose word is irrevocable, like the law," is the formula with which new members are sworn in. Documents stored in the library

are witness to past activities and endeavors of the members, aiming towards the reconstruction of political freedom in the native country, the welfare of the common people, liberal and social idealism. The motto of the society's theater defines its function: "To bring before the eyes of our people the glorious heritage of our gallant ancestors, their glory and martyrdom, their perseverance in conviction and their humiliation." The titles of the plays on the yellowing programs show that the task was carried out: "Jan Hus," "Jan Hus a Jeroným," "Jan Žižka," "Psohlavci," "Jan Výrava," "Karel Havlíček Borovský," and other names of Czech historical heroes. But dramas and comedies from village life are not missing: ". . . about young people, when he is rich and she is poor, and the father does not allow him to marry, or disinherits him. We know these things from our lives there, but it also happens here. You can laugh and cry in it. . . . About the son who gets rich and does not acknowledge his father any more. That happens more often at home than here." On different festive occasions the society shows pictures borrowed from the Film Library. "People love to come, especially if it is something from the Fatherland and they can see their old country." For twenty-five years they have been making their own films and have recorded all the national Czechoslovak and American celebrations and manifestations in which they have taken part—festivals, weddings, and funerals, life in Czech communities and families, on farms and in Detroit.

Martin Kovařík is an outstanding example of a Sokol. Both he and his wife by virtue of their wisdom, life experience, and achievements, as well as by genuine kindness, are the recognized spiritual leaders of the group. They came to America as teenagers from Moravian villages and married here. "We had nothing when we came; first our people wanted to have a wife and a house, but the first thing one had was a car. Now they have big, beautiful farms and I have a house with all the modern equipment and gadgets." Cultural activities within both the American and Czech societies, conscious allegiance to their new country, as well as awareness of civic responsibilities, distinguish them. "Our people began to settle here a century ago. We have a share in the growth of the city. On the 250th Anniversary of Detroit, we marched right behind the American Indians."

Both of the Kovaříks remember clearly their holidays in the old country. "At carnival time masked men used to go around the village, straw wrapped all over their bodies, boys disguised as women, each taking what he could. There were no theatrical outfitting companies where one could rent a costume as there are here; they blackened their faces, went around on wooden goats, or led a bear; in short, they used anything which was at hand." When the Kovařík's son was getting married not long ago, his wedding was celebrated in the Sokol Hall, "the way it always is whenever at least one of the newlyweds is a Moravian." At midnight the older women take the wreath—one should say veil—from the bride's head and, singing the usual songs of parting with girlhood and parents, they bind her head with a scarf. Then everyone buys a dance with her. Sometimes over three hundred dollars is collected. Then they seat the bride on a chair in the middle of the hall and the boys lead the bridegroom away. In a hurry they put in her place an ugly man, ridiculous and small, and cover him with a white bed sheet. They call the bridegroom and tell him that he cannot get the bride as easily as he thought. "How much do you give?" "I don't have any money." If he understands what is going on, he refuses to pay and makes as many jokes and jests as

possible. Eventually, he gives his whole purse and is supposed to embrace the bride. At the last moment they pull away the bed sheet and he kisses the ugly man. If the bridegroom is an American, he gets scared. Afterwards one shaves the groom with a special wooden blade and then puts a horseshoe on the bride's shoe. "You want to know what it means? It simply means that we want to collect some money for the bride."

Kovařík was obliging enough to show me moving pictures of their life, among which there was a complete record in color of a harvest celebration of the year before. It was organized by the Western Czech Brethren Unity, to which all of them belonged, at the Ryzner's farm in Owoso, where the Detroit Sokol has its summer camp. Kovařík arranged the program.

In his native village, Žeravice, there were two kinds of harvest celebration. One of these was on the Berchtold Estate, where half of the village was employed. The crop was brought home with two sheaves; the first was the "bride," the second was the "old woman." They were carried by the two most popular boys among the reapers, and two girls carried the two wreaths. After the ceremony at the landowner's house, they got a barrel of beer and danced in the yard. The other celebration, for the rest of the community, was given by the mayor. Kovařík got some other ideas from a booklet printed in Prague, *"Harvest Celebration"*, an ancient Moravian custom from the time of serfdom, to be performed at harvest and on other occasions." The characters in the program of the Owoso celebration were "the landowner and his wife, the grandfather, old and young maid, two boys, a night-watchman, older people, young laborers and servants, children. All, including the people, in national costume."

The procession seemed endless. In front went the band, then two boys with bouquets of grain-ears and field-flowers, two girls with wreaths, children, women, and men. "The nicest thing about it is that all the children were born in America," said Mrs. Kovařík. Some rakes were seen, which had been brought from among the stage properties of the theater, as well as a few scythes, whose blades were covered with paper. "More of them would mean trouble; who would transport them here from the theater? Our farmers have hundreds of acres, they must use machines. We always used to go on wagons with sickles and scythes, but since one of the women fell down and the sickle almost pierced her body, we march. The majority of people you see are our farmers. Look at those from Bannister, how worn out, how bent they are. They settled there because the farms there were in a bad state and cheap. Now they have excellent grounds, a National Hall, and a Czech school, where their children learn how to read and write in Czech." They came in various native costumes, from Detroit and from the farms around the Lakes and in Canada.

In the yard there was a platform with a microphone, before which stood the landowner and his wife. "There were so many people that I had to use it so that everyone could hear well." Behind them sat the grandfather in the old-fashioned outfit of a Czech peasant—Kovařík himself. The two boys and girls step onto the platform, approach the landowner and his wife with bouquets and wreaths, and recite some verses of good will. A night-watchman appears and, running here and there, he blows his horn towards the crowds and complains that he does not get any credit for watching the village every night. A young man and woman replace the landowner couple at the microphone and begin to quarrel, when the grandfather, supporting himself on

his cane, gets up and says, "But children, children, don't argue . . .," and with a few more admonishing words he reconciles them. The young people dance around the landowner and his wife, the crowd applauds and slowly leaves the yard to dance on the meadow. Kovařík turned on the lights in the room.

"After our celebration a few years ago, two young Americans came and wanted to know what it was, what our beginnings in this country were and whether there was a book written about it. So we sent an article to the American newspapers with the explanation that it was a harvest festival which means thanks given to God for a good crop. A year later an American society organized a similar harvest festival. They liked the idea, the meaning. You see how easy it is to spread our customs in America? But something should be done with the play. It should be Americanized. Or—you are educated and you know us from here and from the old country—why wouldn't you modernize it? Why wouldn't you write a play for us?" I asked him for suggestions.

"Something should be added so that our children would *believe* it. Talk about the old Czech history, but as if it would be here, not there. They all should know about our past. Here they read about the cowboys and Indians and horseback riding, but that is American history. They don't know anything about the cultivation of the soil, how their ancestors worked there and we here. The modernization of this city has happened during our lifetime. We lived in huts with no water or electricity, many of us together. These were our beginnings, our lives. Tell them how we bought a cottage, a small farm, worked and paid for it. How much easier it is today with tractors and everything. It is pleasure, not work. We came here to provide a better life for our children. They have gadgets, but gadgets will not save them if bad times come. It would be a pity if they forgot their origins."

Kovařík introduced new figures into the Harvest celebration. They extend the scene at the landowner's house by repeating its symbolic action on a new level: the bouquet of grain ears and the wreath are to transfer fertility from the grain to the landowner and his wife, while the speech of the grandfather is to convey his wisdom to the young couple. The sheaf is absent, and it is the old man who carries off the climax. Commenting upon the play, Kovařík preserves the attitude of this old man and interprets the scene in terms of a cultural conflict between the two generations of Czechs in Detroit, the old one which immigrated from abroad and the younger one born in America. Protagonist of the moral values inherited from his tradition and contained in his life experience, Kovařík sees an unbridgeable gap between the material ideals of his sons and himself. Having attained, at the expense of hard work, material security for those who will follow, he feels unable to transmit to the new generation his spiritual legacy. The play is therefore intended by him to make the past an integral part of the present ("speak about the Czech history but as if it were here") and to reveal moral values as the only basis of personal and communal well-being and as the ultimate safeguard for the continuity of life. In trying to create an actually efficient, "modern" play out of the conventional harvest ritual, Kovařík was on the way to making a human drama out of the very core of this ritual, the principle of death and resurrection. Such work was accomplished by Sophocles, when he wrote his *Oedipus Rex* for the Dionysos Festival in Athens.

Thus in the harvest festivals of the American Czechs and Slovaks gradual change can be observed from ritual to drama. The irrational substratum and figurative presentation give way to a rational attitude and realistic performance; instead of a community of participants, there appear two distinct groups of actors and spectators. The syncretism of the sheaf—"old woman"—in the ritual is replaced by a simple juxtaposition of the sheaf and man in the mock-performance; on the Slovak stage the sheaf recedes into the background, leaving the peasant collective to step into front position. In Kovařík's attempt, the sheaf disappears completely and the action is carried by the individualized figure of the old man. The human being interlaced with the symbolism of the vegetable and animal world in the ritual becomes gradually the main and, finally, the only medium of the play.

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SOME CZECH-AMERICAN FORMS OF DIVINATION AND SUPPLICATION

BY LAWRENCE V. RYAN

IN certain rural communities of the Upper Mississippi Valley, where most of the people are of Czech descent, quite a few folk customs brought over from the old country in the last century still persist. Among these customs several forms of divination and supplication have survived into the present generation. Because they are rarely practiced now even where Czech-Americans constitute a majority of the population, it seems important to record them before they have died out completely. In at least two areas with which I am familiar, most of the older men and women and even persons as young as thirty years of age recall having engaged in these practices in their youth, and occasionally certain of them are performed even today.

These two areas (from which all the information contained in this article has been gathered) are the countryside around the towns of Spillville and Protivin, in northeastern Iowa, and the rectangle formed by the towns of New Prague, Veseli, Montgomery, and Lonsdale in Le Sueur and Rice Counties, Minnesota. The names of three of these towns identify them as originally Czech settlements, and Spillville is famous, of course, for the extended visit paid to it by the composer Antonin Dvořák. Though families with different national backgrounds have moved in over the years and have intermarried freely with the descendants of the original settlers, the communities have retained a great deal of their Czech atmosphere. Czech is spoken on the streets, and the names on the signs over many of the shops are Czech names. In some of the churches, announcements and the sermon are still given in Czech at one of the services on Sunday, and the choir may sing hymns in Czech as well as in English. On major holidays, particularly those connected with the time around Christmas and Easter, many old folk customs are observed, and most of the practices described below are related to these two seasons.

The formulas of divination and supplication may be divided into two main groups: those having to do with prophesying one's own future and those relating to the prosperity and good fortune of the entire household or farm.

Practically all the divinations are associated with the Christmas season, many of them being used as young people's games on Christmas Day. No one takes the rites seriously, but they are entertaining as pastimes and interesting to folklorists as survivals in America of customs that are well known in Western and Central Europe. Parallels to most of these practices may be found in the British Isles, the Netherlands, France, and especially Austria and Germany, which exerted a considerable influence on the folk life of old Bohemia. Some of them, however, seem to have no exact parallels in the folkways of other European countries. The divinations are concerned with such questions as the nature of one's future career, the possibility of travel, sickness and health, and, for the girls, marriage.

If a child wishes to foretell his adult occupation, he melts lead and drops it into a pan of cold water. Then he studies the configuration of the cooling lead. The figure which it appears to form is considered prophetic of his career; for example, if it forms an animal, he will become a farmer, if a hammer or saw, a carpenter, and so on.

Two practices are concerned with travel. If several people wish to know who among them will travel farthest during the coming year, they place lighted candles in walnut shells and float the shells on water. The one whose "boat" travels the greatest distance or whose candle burns longest can expect to make an important journey before the following Christmas. Another method of inquiring about prospects for travel is to have everyone place a slice of bread on the floor. One of the dogs is then called in from outside. The one whose slice of bread the dog picks up first is certain to go on a journey within the next twelve months.

This latter practice is also used to prognosticate death: instead of going on a journey, the person whose bread is selected by the dog may expect to die before another Christmas Day comes around. Several other divinations are supposed to forecast death, sickness, or health for the coming year. At the end of Christmas dinner, every child is given an apple, which is then cut in half across the axis of the core. If the seeds thus exposed form a five-pointed star (the sign of Christmas), the recipient of the apple may expect good health. If the seeds form a cross (symbol of the Passion), he may look for sickness or even death. One may also try his luck with walnuts; if he finds good meat inside the first walnut that he cracks, he will have good health; if a shriveled or bitter kernel, he will have illness. When one wishes to learn about his over-all prospects for the year to come, he lays a silver knife between two slices of *vánočka* (a braided fruit and almond bread baked only for Christmas). If the knife becomes tarnished or sticky after lying between the slices for some time, the person who put it there may expect bad luck; but if the knife comes out clean, he may look for a prosperous year.

During the Christmas season, young women try several methods of learning about their chances for marriage. On St. Barbara's Day (4 December), a girl may place a twig from a cherry tree in a glass of water. If the twig buds out by Christmas Eve, she is certain to marry during the following year.¹ On Christmas Day, girls throw shoes over their shoulders. If the toe of the shoe points toward the door when it strikes the floor, the thrower may hope to marry soon; but if the toe points inward, she will stay at home for another year.²

There are several ways of acquiring more specific information about one's future husband. The girl who wishes to know about the previous marital status of the man can find out by closing her eyes and picking up a handful of sticks from the kindling box. If she takes up an even number, she will marry a bachelor; an odd number indicates a widower. A young lady who is popular enough to have several suitors may learn which one will marry her by writing their names on several pieces of paper and carrying them to church in her pocket on Christmas Eve. Then, just as the prayers of the midnight service begin, she must reach into her pocket and pull forth only one slip of paper: she will marry the man whose name she finds written on it.³

Once the identity of the future husband is known, a girl may wish to keep track of his movements when he is away from her. To find out where her lover is, she takes a dog with her up to a lilac bush or a cherry tree. If neither of these is available, another

kind of fruit tree suffices. Then, shaking the tree, she recites the following rhyme: "Třesu, třesu bez, / ozvi se mi pes, / kde můj milý večerí dnes."⁴ The dog will bark toward the place where the sweetheart may be found. This divination may also be worked without the aid of the dog; for after having been shaken, the tree should bend in the direction of the lover. The custom may also be used to determine the direction from which an as yet unknown husband-to-be will come to woo his future bride.⁵

As might be expected in farming regions, most of the surviving rites of supplication for prosperity are concerned with crops and livestock. And, since most of the Czech-Americans in the two areas from which my information comes are Roman Catholics, some of their customs are intimately connected with the liturgical calendar and enjoy the approval of the Church. These practices were probably taken more seriously at one time than the Christmas divinations described above, but within the past generation they have almost disappeared. The Christmas divinations will perhaps survive somewhat longer because they can be performed as holiday games whether one believes in them or not; but one does not perform ceremonies such as the following for very long after he ceases to take them seriously. Besides, the Christmas games can all be played in the privacy of the home, while several of the rituals described below are of a public character and have declined as community interest in performing them has declined.

The most widely practiced means of insuring a prosperous year on the farm is to gather up the remains of Christmas dinner carefully and distribute them in the following manner. Edible leftovers are given to the barnyard animals to guarantee their fertility and good health as well as to honor the livestock on the day on which the Savior was born in a stable among dumb beasts.⁶ Some of the bones and other waste are buried in the garden and some are scattered over the fields to insure a good harvest.⁷ A bone or a bit of bread is sometimes dropped into the well to keep the water pure. Finally, the crumbs are carefully brushed off the tablecloth and thrown into the stove or fireplace to protect the house against fire.

Next to Christmastide, the Easter season is the most important time for practices related to the prosperity of the farm and the household. On Good Friday, in commemoration of the Passion, many Czech women bake *jidášský* 'Judases' rolls made of long strips of plain bread dough twisted into loops to resemble halters. The crumbs and leftovers of the *jidášský* are often buried in the orchard ground to insure a plentiful yield from the fruit trees. The symbolism of this Good Friday custom is curious; in part it resembles another Central European rite, more specifically, a German one, in which an effigy of Judas is burned on Easter Saturday, the ashes and other remains of the effigy being saved until May Day, when they are planted in the fields as a preventive against blight. The halter-shaped rolls may be derived from some custom similar to the German one, or they may merely be reminders that Judas hanged himself after betraying the Christ. And though locally different trees have been associated with Judas' death, there seems to be no reason for connecting Judas with orchards, unless one thinks of "the fig tree which Jesus cursed and made barren."⁸

The remaining customs having to do with the farmers' concern for a prosperous year are linked closely with the liturgy and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Until very recent times in New Prague and Montgomery, the people gathered pussy willows to bring to church for blessing on Palm Sunday. Then each family placed one spray

of the willow in its fields, saying prayers for good crops as they did so. The custom has an appropriateness, for the pussy willow is one of the first signs of renewed spring in the northern part of the United States, and its flowering at the season of the Resurrection makes it a symbolically fitting plant for such a ceremonial.⁹

The custom of praying for relief from afflictions and for a bountiful harvest on the Rogation Days—the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the Feast of the Ascension—is universal in the Roman Catholic Church. But in the Czech farming communities of Iowa and Minnesota the importance of these days has always been especially stressed. Until recently, a procession of the entire congregation was organized after Mass on these days to follow the pastor into the fields for the purpose of reciting the prescribed Litany of the Saints and praying for good crops. In New Prague, at the east and south ends of the town, crucifixes were erected, and after visiting the fields, the procession made its way to each of these to pray to St. Wenceslaus before returning to the church for benediction and the conclusion of the ceremony.¹⁰

As the summer progresses, advantage of another feast day is sometimes taken to obtain a blessing on the household. On the morning of the Feast of the Assumption (15 August), housewives bring their kitchen herbs and spices to church to be blessed by the priest. It is hoped that the blessing will protect the home from evils and add to the well-being of the family. The origin of this rite is obscure, but the appropriateness of this day for blessing herbs and spices is suggested by a verse in the Lesson for the Assumption: "I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatic balm: I yielded a sweet odor like the best myrrh" (Ecclesiasticus 24:20).¹¹

The cycle of divination and supplication comes to its close in early autumn. After nine months in which charms had been worked and prayers said for a prosperous year, Czech-Americans used to celebrate the harvest-home with a thanksgiving supper on the feast of their national patron saint, Duke Wenceslaus of Bohemia (28 September). This celebration was called *pouť* 'a pilgrimage' because it was customary for people from the surrounding countryside to make the journey into town on foot like pilgrims. In Bohemia the *pouť* really was a sort of pilgrimage, for groups of peasants sang hymns as they walked to the festival and stopped at wayside shrines to offer prayers of thanksgiving for a successful harvest. That Czech-Americans held this celebration on the day of their national patron saint was doubly fitting, for Wenceslaus is said to have been in one respect a farmer himself. According to tradition, "good King Wenceslaus" with his own hands sowed the wheat and pressed the grapes to be used for the Mass in his own household.

Such are the rites of divination and supplication of Czech-Americans with which I have become familiar. Other customs of like nature there may perhaps be. Whether there are or not, one thing is certain: like those described above, they are disappearing rapidly, and this paper has attempted to record a few of them which were once widely known but are now almost gone.

NOTES

¹ It is hard to say why St. Barbara's Day should have been selected for this rite. There is nothing in the saint's history to connect her with prospective brides. However, there may be some significance in the fact that the prayers of the Roman Catholic Mass for her feast (the Common

Mass of a Virgin Martyr) are full of allusions to the bride and bridegroom (the soul and Jesus Christ), and the gospel is the story of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). Again, St. Barbara is traditionally associated with the retinue of St. Nicholas (Feast, 6 December) in the minds of Czech children, and, except for St. Lucy, is the only well known female saint whose feast falls within the month preceding Christmas. See my article, "Christmas Customs of the Czechs in America," *Catholic World*, CLXXIV (December, 1951), 188-193, for further discussion of Christmas charms.

² Throwing of shoes, which is closely associated with marriage, especially in its sexual aspects, is also used in some countries to discover the direction from which the bridegroom will come. See *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach (New York, 1949), II, 1008.

³ Similar customs in Germany and England are cited by John Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain* (London, 1895), passim.

⁴ "I shake, I shake the lilac; answer me, dog, where is my sweetheart this evening?"

⁵ Why the dog should function in two of these Czech divinations is not clear. In certain parts of England, young women practice a similar rite: to see the image of her future husband, one must walk backward to a pear tree, and then walk around the tree three times (A. P. Wright, *British Calendar Customs: England*, ed. T. E. Jones [London, 1936], I, 80). The English girls seem to manage without the help of the dog.

⁶ It is also the custom in parts of England to give livestock extra food on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day (Wright, *British Calendar Customs*, III, 219).

⁷ In the fertility rites of ancient pagan times in Central Europe, bones and entrails of human sacrifices were used for this purpose. The Czech-American custom is apparently a refinement. See the Good Friday bread custom described below.

⁸ *Dictionary of Folklore*, II, 561. The connection of these customs with ancient springtime fertility rites and ceremonies of propitiation is evident. It is worth noting that Good Friday is also a day of special significance for English farmers; see, for example, Wright, *British Calendar Customs*, I, 80.

⁹ My informant on the use of pussy willows in New Prague (a woman about 60 years old) also remembered this custom from her childhood in Spillville. She assumed that the practice was peculiar to communities such as those in which she had lived, and that it had originated because palms were hard to come by in the pioneer days of these towns. However, the practice of substituting branches of trees other than the palms and olives mentioned in the liturgy for Palm Sunday is widespread, as is belief in the blessings that the palms can bring to the household. See *Dictionary of Folklore*, II, 841; Wright, *British Calendar Customs*, I, 54; Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, I, 120.

¹⁰ Wherever the procession takes place, prayers appropriate to the local titular saint are usually said. The Catholic church in New Prague is named after St. Wenceslaus.

¹¹ This practice also was once widely observed (Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, I, 350).

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DANCE RELATIVES OF MID-EUROPE AND MIDDLE AMERICA: A VENTURE IN COMPARATIVE CHOREOLOGY¹

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CONSIDERABLE distance separates Mid-Europe and Middle America, but this does not prevent inclusion of the mazurka in the Mexican Hat Dance. Journeys of less popular dances over more arduous routes are so common that they cause the choreologist little concern. When square dancing turns up in the Arctic zone, when an automobile dance appears in darkest Africa, when a Slavic step is mixed with the *jarabe* of the state of Jalisco, we do not blink. Rather, we make of obvious connections the starting point for excursions into the more remote dance forms, both in location and time, of the two continents: for almost by chance, in the course of research, we have come upon analogies that link them in large areas.

Systematic interpretation will focus first on that part of Mid-Europe which adjoins the Danubian basin, from Czechoslovakia to Macedonia, and next on the circumference of the Central Mexican Plateau, from Jalisco to Morelos, with some diffusionistic expansion, and moving backwards from the known present to the mythical past: a known present obscured by hearsay, a mythical past studded with facts.

These two areas have distinctive topographies and histories, yet they share similar locations and ideal conditions for constant invasion. Both narrow into bottlenecks connecting two continents; both combine high mountain ranges and open agricultural uplands and lowlands; both bulge into peninsulas seething with culture—Greece and Yucatan—although Mexico, of course, lacks the migration inducement of a great river basin like the Danube.

I. FOLK AND RITUAL DANCES OF MID-EUROPE

In the course of time the Western Slavs and Roumanians have accumulated an almost limitless variety of dances which combine on some occasions many types, while on others one type only is engaged. In the midst of this dazzling plenty, three main types can be distinguished: couple dances of recent vintage; group round dances; rituals for closed assemblies of men or women.

Modern Couple Dances. All the folk-dancing world knows the mazurka and the polka, their variants, and their blends as the polka-mazurka (terms which identify both certain steps and certain complete dances). The steps combine a hop with a step-close—the mazurka in triple time, with an accent on the second beat in good Slavic manner; the polka in duple time with an upbeat for the hop. The blend is a polka in triple time. All can be danced by couples straight ahead or turning, in embrace position or in open position with only adjoining arms hooked. The best-known variant, the Bohemian, or heel-and-toe, polka, is always in open position. As *mazur*, the triple-timer is danced by peasants with an indefinite number of couples; as *mazurka*, it may be a citified set for four couples.² Originally, the polka had a definite

structure of ten figures, five of which were adopted in salons: a promenade, three valse figures, and a *pas bohémien*.³

The origins are less well known than the steps. The mazurka very likely came from the Polish province of Mazovia, but the polka is probably not of Polish origin. Sachs derives the name from the Czech word *pulka* 'half'—that is, half-step or change-step—and relates a rumor of its discovery by a Bohemian peasant girl early in the 1830's, its acceptance in Prague in 1835, in Vienna in 1839, and in Paris about 1840.⁴ Both dances, as indeed the entire vogue of embraced couple dances, are attributed to German instigation. As early as the sixteenth century, German peasants whirled in a dead clinch in the *Drehtanz* or *Weller*, considered the precursor of the waltz.⁵ The Austrian *Ländler* is just as old. The polka is but a waltz with an additional hop, and formerly included a valse.

I mention just by name a few more of the folk dances that sprang from the peasantry of Poland and Czechoslovakia: the strenuous *Obertas* and *Oberek*, the *galop* or *cwal*, the *Kujawiak* and *Redowa*, and the courtly Polish polonaise which was popularized as *Polska*; but three important dances with set figures must be briefly described. The Polish *Krakowiak* (from the vicinity of Krakow) is said to have started as a round dance for men, then to have added women for coupling, to have attached a preliminary promenade like the polonaise, and, finally, to have added quadrille formations with polka, stamps, and leaping heel-clicks called *holupiec*.⁶ The Bohemian *Komarno* has exactly the same structure as the Austrian *Strohschneider*, the German *Herr Schmidt*, the Swedish *Bleking*, and, as we will see later, the Mexican *Raspa*—a sequence of heel-thrusts and swinging in polka.⁷ The *Ctyri Kroky*, or Four Steps, is the cousin of the German *Siebenschritt* and similar European dances.⁸ Other folk dances of this area find counterparts elsewhere, but none have become as indispensable, from Spain to Finland, as the polka.

Though the impulse may have come from adjoining countries, and though forms spread outward, the couple rounds of the Czechs, Moravians, and Slovaks remain distinctive in their lilting style and in the great variety of groupings. Though broken up into couples, these rounds continually progress counterclockwise, in single or double file, with the man or woman forwards or backwards, or sideways, with holds by ballroom position, elbow-hooking, hand-clasping, or by a kerchief. Some introduce occupational mime, as in the Bohemian cobbler's dance, the Moravian butcher's dance, and the Slovak shepherd's dance.⁹ Some use the Hungarian *csárdás* step. Some conclude with the fertility leap or toss-up, a hoisting of the man by the woman.

The reception of the polka and other couple dances in other parts of Mid-Europe coincides with the areas of German settlement which affected not only Poland but Hungary and Roumania after the Mongolian invasions, from 1241 to the nineteenth century; and with the Austro-Hungarian sections of northern Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, Herzegovina. The last-named accepted these steps very recently and reluctantly; Slovenia introduced the *Sedmorka* (*Siebenschritt*) only after its independence.¹⁰

Despite their development within the last 150 years, these popular dances retain the anonymity of a true folk product, with vagueness of origin and uncertain dates of diffusion. Furthermore, they did not suddenly spring out of nothing. They all grew out of medieval steps and circle dances and show their connection with the ritual

rounds of the Southern Slavs. The *Kraĵovjak* in particular shows layers of gradual pattern accumulations through the centuries.

Choral Round Dances. Whereas the couple rounds serve exclusively recreational purposes, the choral rounds or chain dances of Mid-Europe are associated with semi-ritual or purely ritualistic springtime and harvest festivals, as well as with secular celebrations. While the couple rounds progress in a circle as an incidental part of their pattern, the ritual rounds trace a circle as a vestige of an ancient magical practice. They are called *kolo* 'circle' or 'wheel' in Yugoslavia, *horo* in Bulgaria, *hora* (from Greek *χώρας*) in Roumania. In Serbia the fifty-odd types branched out into some 1600 dances; in Roumania, ten types developed into 2500 local variants.¹¹ These and many other variations owe their differences in style, pattern, and step to both symbolic and geographical causes.

The most solemn *kolos* are for men alone or women alone. In Croatia a company of Georges and a Green George, *Zeleni Djuro*, dance from house to house and sing about the awakening of nature and the fertility of the soil.¹² Bačka peasants dance the *kolo* for their harvest. In two riverine locations, Subotica and Vlasotinci, a girls' *Lazarica* celebrates a resurrection on St. Lazarus' Day, a week before Easter; and formerly a *Kraljica*, or "Queens' Dance," on St. George's Day (6 May) and Whitsuntide brought health and happiness with the aid of tall mitred headdresses and swords. In times of drought the company of *Dodole* sing and dance through the settlement to invoke rain and fertility. Householders souse the leader with water as she dances alone. She is *Dodola* herself—a girl, or sometimes a transvestite boy, nude under a covering of leaves, flowers, and grass.¹³ In Bulgaria she is called *Perperuna*, perhaps the feminine counterpart of the Slavic god Perun.¹⁴ At weddings men or women alone may circle for magic protection in conclusion of the bachelor's or maiden's state.¹⁵

Mixed *kolos* show important geographical distinctions in the placement of the sexes. In mountainous, southeasterly Macedonia, and also usually in Montenegro, the men all precede the women, be this due to Turkish, Greek Orthodox, or prehistoric pagan influence, or to all three. In more exposed Croatia, close to the couple round area, men and women alternate in a line. In Serbia both arrangements prevail. A man always leads the mixed *kolos*, sometimes also the women's *kolos* (the woman leading often holding a snake effigy), and a tail-leader brings up the rear. In Transylvania and the Banat men and women may even pair off into couples. Such mixed rounds celebrate church festivals (as Whitsuntide in Slovenia, or St. John's Eve around bonfires), wakes, and, in Serbia, harvests.

Closed and open *kolos* operate on different principles. In a closed circle the dancers face center or obliquely and progress in various directions, mostly to the right. In the open arc or serpentine line, the leader guides the patterns. He separates himself from the group and executes spectacular leaps, crouches, and turns. Such open chains are well suited to ritual meanderings through the villages and fields, up and down hill, to invoke blessings and to bring fertility. In a Slovene funeral dance, the *Metliško Kolo*, the leader joins arms with the first woman and lets the whole line run through this door. He speeds them up until they are "wild grey horses."¹⁶ Though such open *kolos* accompany rituals in Slovenia, and though the *Zetsko Kolo* of Montenegro is closed, generally the chain prevails in the southeast, and the closed circle, single or double, is

characteristic of the northwestern section of Yugoslavia. In Roumania the *hora* can be a line or a circle, but is more often a closed circle.

The dancers are always linked in one of many ways. In order of prevalence from northwest to southeast these methods are: with hands joined, with the woman's fingers gently on the man's palms, with arms on the shoulders of neighbors, with arms crossed in back, with some object such as a string of beads, kerchief, or the neighbor's belt.¹⁷ It is interesting that these holds are echoed in the Czecho-Slovakian couple dances.

There are two predominant step types—a step-close-step-hop and a grapevine of side-forward-side-back—and infinite variations and combinations. The former, simpler type is illustrated in the Roumanian and Palestinian *hora*, and in the Bulgarian *Tropanka*, the latter in the Serbian *Vranjanka* and the Macedonian *Laka Lisa*. Symmetrical *kolos* progress the same number of steps in either direction; unsymmetrical *kolos*—the more common type—progress more to the right. The free leg can be swung forward, back, or across, but never very high. The shoulders twist to right or left in harmony with the steps. The leader's improvisations give complete leeway to ingenuity, in combinations of crouches, leaps, and stamps.

Further variety is introduced in the quality of the movement. The women always bounce instead of hopping; they keep their eyes downcast in their subdued weavings. Male and female hold themselves erect but relaxed, with flexible knees. In the eastern districts recently released from Turkish domination the style and costume show Oriental influence, and often have a clandestine, undulating manner; such is the dance of the Macedonian *čifčije*, the workers on feudal estates around Kičevo.¹⁸ The mountaineers have hopping *kolos*; the people of the northern plains and river valleys of Yugoslavia have shaking *kolos* in which the bodies of the dancers vibrate at every step. The Serbian *Vlaški* and Roumanian *Sârba* are vigorous, with high raising of the knees. The Roumanian *Brâul* resembles the lively *branles* of France.¹⁹ Recently, along with the passing of older instruments, the style has become more obvious and lively.

Rhythmic qualities also range from the relatively simple *hora-sârba* to the infinitely complex Macedonian *kolos*. In the former, the six-count step may overlap the musical phrase; but that is nothing compared to the Macedonian counterpoint of steps within meters of $7/8$, $8/8$, or $11/8$, to $21/8$. These are compounded of pulses of three and two beats, the three for a longer lilt, the two for a shorter one; thus $8/8$ is divided into, say, 3-2-3.²⁰ In Montenegro and Macedonia these rhythms are sometimes executed silently, without the usual songs or bagpipes. In contemplating these differences in rhythmic complexity, we must call to mind the simple rhythm and meter of the typical German folk dance in contrast with the intricacies of Asia Minor.

These two influences, the Germanic and the Turkish, have been the most recent and clearly recognizable molding forces. But continuous and manifold influences followed each settlement or invasion, spread as borrowings or interchanges between villages or states (as the *Sârba* to Roumania) and, with the aid of individual inventiveness, produced the present dazzling variety of rounds. No one knows how long this has been going on. Surmises of origin in the Greek χορός are probably correct, especially when one considers the amazing similarity of these dances to Greek chain dances, e.g., the *Kalamatianos*, *Tsamikos*, *Hasapikos*.²¹ This would push the ultimate origin still further back, to that of the Greek τραγῳδία 'goat-song'. Some scholars also remark on the serpentine patterns of the labyrinthine dance of Theseus and the Cretan

youths and maidens.²² It is not to be thought that this chain dance pattern, so widely prevalent around the Aegean, filled a dance vacuum in the Balkan peninsula. It more likely encountered aboriginal rounds, perhaps closed clockwise circles, and produced blends analogous to the later *Krakoviak*. These patterns did not come to a halt here; they wandered westward along the Mediterranean to the Provençal *Farandoule* and Catalan *Contrapas*, and along the Danube to the French *branle* and thence, as late as the eleventh century, to the Faroe Islands.²³ It is curious that the step in the northwest of Europe resembles that of the *hora*, but in reverse direction accords with the sunwise habits of local round dances, such as the Sword Dances.²⁴ The descendants have often changed their names, but some (e.g., the Czech *Kalamaiĕa*) remain recognizable. The Mediterranean types are generally open and the Northwestern ones closed; but running serpentines, such as the German-Austrian *Schemenlaufen*, confuse the issue and suggest an indigenous substratum here, too. The open rounds have tended to retain their original fertility symbolism, and the closed ones to become recreational both in Mid-Europe and elsewhere. In the Balkans the rounds have not only developed the richest forms but also remained in closest association with agricultural and wedding—thus fertility—festivals.

Ancient Male Combat Dances. Another kind of round dance survives in a few isolated sections of Mid-Europe and is gradually disappearing. It forms a part of the magic rites of brotherhoods who have gone through an ordeal of initiation. The most savage of these is the Roumanian *Joc de Calușari* 'horse-play' in villages of the Transylvania Alps and Carpathian mountains. Before Twelfth Night and Whitsunday nine men assemble from nine neighboring villages. They are initiated by a leader into the mystical gestures and figures of their dance; and they put on belled boots and ribboned hats and take an oath under a sword. In some villages they blacken their faces. Their troop includes a masked fool, a goat-masker, a transvestite, and a standard-bearer with a decorated pole surmounted by a horse's head. The men leap about wildly in a circle around the fool or lean on the sticks in their hands. With the sticks they engage in fierce battle, formerly bloody and even fatal. They enact a death and resurrection drama. They leap over sick people to cure them. They show the pagan heritage of the rite in many ways: by number symbolism, by their exclusion from church, their frenzy, their animal associations, their connection with fairies such as the *Rusaliile*, or nature spirits, and with the sun, and finally by the destruction and burial of their paraphernalia.²⁵

In the mountains of Macedonia another fraternity, the *Rusalije*, meet at Midwinter. That is the time when *Rusalĕe*, ancient Slavic water spirits, were abroad.²⁶ The dancers start with an open circular procession, and swing their sabres in symbolic patterns to chase away evil spirits. They cure people and animals, and finally they leap about in a wild circle dance of victory. These dancers also are excluded from church and from cemeteries and may not make the sign of the cross.²⁷

The Slovene carnival *Korantovanje* combines battle, animals, and an agricultural drama. *Kopjaši* herald the spring. Animals enter—a horse, *Rusa*, and a bear, *Medved*—symbolizing the forest spirits and the approach of spring. Goat-skin clad youths, *Koranti*, and a Green George, *Zeleni Jurij*, enact a battle symbolizing winter's resistance to the forces of spring. They jump about erratically and frighten children. Then they hold a plough gaily bedecked with pine trees and pulled by a group of six youths,

the *Orači*. Singing, they proceed from house to house to plough and to receive gifts.²⁸

Separate elements of these compounds occur sporadically elsewhere. *Kolos* of Green Georges have already been mentioned. In Bulgaria hobby-horses leap in wild turning dances; in Poland a bearded horseman has been admitted to church and to the Corpus Christi procession.²⁹ In Serbia an *Oale*, a masked dancer with horns, accompanies a transvestite from the second to the sixth of January. In Roumania a goat, *Capra*, capers on New Year's Eve as an impersonation of the devil.³⁰ Along the coasts of Croatia and Dalmatia the battling factions have been renamed Moors and Christians, or Moors and Turks; e.g., in the *Tanac* of the island of Krk and in the *Moreška* and *Kumpanija* of Korčula.³¹ These have thus been frankly adapted to Christianity, whereas the more savage rounds acknowledge Catholicism only by their appearance on what is now a Christian festival.

A previous issue of the *JAF* provides a list of the relatives of these combat dances elsewhere in Europe and in America, with or without animals, with or without the resurrection drama, with or without Crusaders' renaming.³² Hence it is necessary only to emphasize the similarities with the Balkan forms, and to remark on the particularly aboriginal aspects of the *Calușar* and *Rusalije*. Such diffusion is, however, an essential premise for any interpretation.

If the origin of the *kolo* type of dance dims into the remote past, the story of these combat dances might appear to be completely nebulous; for the *kolo* type begins where the *Calușar* and *Rusalije* leave off, the *Korantovanje* forming a valuable blending of the agricultural and pre-agricultural strata. However, two components provide some clues. The ploughing in the Slovene carnival could reach back to the early agriculture of the Neolithic period, before 2000 B.C.³³ This was about the time of the diffusion of the horse from the Scythian steppes, along with horse sacrifices which spread to Germanic tribes.³⁴ The horse sacrifice may, however, represent a substitution for an older sacrifice of an animal not extant in this area, such as the reindeer, which features in the somewhat similar Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance of England.³⁵ The shamanistic curative and male initiation rituals have counterparts in the most primitive cultures of the world and apparently hark back to the customs of the aborigines of Mid-Europe. The battle probably was an original component of initiation and has gone through at least two re-interpretations, as a battle of the seasons and then as a battle of the Moors and Christians. Here the wild, leaping round dance became an orderly longways formation. These wild rounds may represent the native dance forms encountered by the invaders; they may survive not only in these amazing ritual vestiges but also in the frenzied improvisations of the *kolo* leaders. How many strata combined into the battle rites of today and how many successive migrations and invasions formed these strata, we can never know. We might suggest that the most ancient nucleus retreated before the glaciers southward, was enriched by the resurrection drama complex of Egypt and the Near East,³⁶ went through various substitutions and reinterpretations about 2000 B.C., met another wave from Greek drama dance, and in some places became adapted to Christian concepts.

2. FOLK AND RITUAL DANCES OF MIDDLE AMERICA

Dance relationships between Mid-Europe and Middle America take the form of obvious borrowings as well as amazing native analogies. The area with the most

striking parallels, Central Mexico, will be reviewed, as in the case of the European area, by going backwards in time from couple dances to rituals, from the transparent to the obscure.

Popular Couple Dances. Mexican couple dances, termed *bailes*, belong to the mestizo population and clearly show in varying degrees their recent European origins. They pertain to secular fiestas, though occasionally they may appear as the recreational part of religious celebrations, such as urban carnivals. The urban mestizos and generally the families of pure, or almost pure, European descent amuse themselves with replicas of urban European folk dances, named polka, polka-mazurka, vals-mazurka, or, in square formations, *cuadrillas*, with subfigures using polka *cruzada* and other adaptations. A particular favorite is the *Raspa*, which has already been mentioned as a descendant from the Bohemian *Komarno*.³⁷ As a rule, the dancers perform in European style. These steps, as we have said, are the most popular recent folk dances of Europe, all except the vals issuing from Central Europe, and vying with the polka for popularity among the Slavs.

The rural mestizos, specifically the *rancheros*, have evolved regional couple dances usually recognizable under the name of *jarabes*.³⁸ They have combined Spanish *zapateado* steps, the polka in numerous variations, the mazurka, and a special variant of the waltz called *atole*. These steps are not usually called by their actual names but by picturesque titles such as *borrachito*. They are performed with a slightly stooping Indian posture and, except for one, with Indian reticence. This exception, the *Jarabe Tapatio*, or Mexican Hat Dance, is more showy and flirtatious than other regional *jarabes* such as the *Michoacano* or *Tlaxcalteco*. It is a remarkable medley, with steps from Spain, Scotland, Poland, and Russia.³⁹

Another dance type has incorporated Slavic steps and should receive mention here, though it is not in the ballroom class. The steps in a number of rituals derived from *Moriscas*, such as the *Conquista* of Cuilapan, are called "polka," "vals," "mazurka," "schotis," even though they have been Indianized almost beyond recognition.⁴⁰ In the neighborhood of Mexico City the *Moros y Cristianos* color their polkas with odd little foot twists and shuffles. The performers evidently grafted these steps onto dance dramas which otherwise show no connection with the secular couple dances.

Though the steps and the whole idea of couple dancing obviously stem from Europe, the exact medium of transference remains conjectural. It is most likely that they came with the influx of Polish, Austrian, and Spanish colonists.⁴¹ After the middle of the nineteenth century, the polka and waltz as well as the *zapateado* created a tremendous furore throughout Latin America, California,⁴² and New Mexico,⁴³ where the *jarabes* also became popular.

Mexico has other secular dances, with Austrian, Negro, or pronounced Indian qualities; but they constitute another problem.

Ceremonial Round Dances. A varied assortment of circular group dances, usually ritual, shows affinities with the *kolo* types. The clearest counterpart to the *kolo*, both in pattern and function, is the *mitote*. Formerly, this dance, named after the Nahuatl word for "dance"—*mitotliliztli*—covered the entire Aztec area, but today it has retreated to the western mountains. It survives as a ritual for planting, rain, and harvest at the fiestas of the Aztecs, Tepehuanes, and Coras in the Sierra Madre Occidental. It is a counterclockwise, mixed circling around an altar, with linked

hands and stamping two-steps.⁴⁴ Further north it appears as a women's arc-shaped file in the Tarahumara *Rutuburi*.⁴⁵ These rounds have retained their Indian style and their agrarian purpose.

In the more accessible states of Central Mexico several native semi-religious group dances combine the *mitote* pattern with European elements. The Tarascan *Sembradoras*, or dance of the sowers, features women in a counterclockwise, mimetic dance for planting at Candlemas. Men, in a subsidiary circle, shoulder spades. The steps and melody have drawn on polka and *zapateado*.

In Querétaro, Morelos, and México, D. F., the *Society of Concheros* celebrates its ceremonies with mixed circle dances. They mix Indian steps with Mediterranean grapevines and turning leaps.⁴⁶ All of the progressions are symmetrical, equally to the right and to the left, as in western Yugoslavia and Catalonia. The formation is closed.

There is every reason to trust the claim of the performers for a pre-Columbian origin of these circlings. In the case of the *mitote* the provenience is even documented in descriptions of spectacular ritual dances that continued throughout the Aztec calendar. Men and women frequently sang and danced in serpentines, linked by flowered garlands; e.g., for the agrarian god Xipe Totec between 22 February and 13 March (corresponding to Carnival) and at the festival for the maize and bean deities, Xilonen and Cinteotl, during the eighth month, 21 June to 9 July (corresponding to St. John's Day).⁴⁷ February and June remain months for special fiestas, though the entire year contains a steady string of celebrations. On various grandiose occasions, not identified by the Spanish reporters, huge concentric closed circles gyrated around the central musicians.⁴⁸

Ritual Combat. On other occasions dancers mimed skirmishes or actual combat. For instance, during the Aztecs' fifteenth month, Huitzilipochtli, god of the sun and of war, was honored by serious duels between slave victims and mimed battles by masked boy votaries.⁴⁹ Quetzalcoatl, god of agriculture, healing, and resurrection, was honored by comic dramas depicting the cure of invalids and animal hunts.⁵⁰

The skirmishes, which were evidently performed in two lines, survive today in male longways dances which abound particularly at Carnival and Corpus Christi fiestas. The majority of these have Spanish names and use colonial costumes, melodies, and dialogue; they go under the name of *Moros y Cristianos* or *Los Santiagos*, after the two factions or after the hobby-horse rider, Santiago. Their aspect and their similarities to European *Moriscas* have been amply treated in my previous article and need only a reminder. Native non-combat longways are also mentioned. Whereas the Hispanized dramas abound near well-known and accessible centers such as Taxco and Amecameca, the more native survivals have retreated to the Sierra Madre Oriental. In the mountains the dialogue may be in the Nahuatl or Totonac languages.⁵¹

The eastern Sierras preserve compound dramas and fiestas. The *Negritos* of Papantla, Vera Cruz, combine ten field workers, two clowns, a transvestite *Marin-guilla*, and a sorcerer. The workers are "bitten" by a snake and brought to life by the sorcerer.⁵² They are associated with a famous circular dance of the *Voladores*, or Flyers, who symbolize the sun birds,⁵³ and with other spectacular group dances, such as *Moros* and *Quetzales* 'sun-quetzal birds.'

The steps I have seen are usually derived from Europe's *zapateados*, *polkas*, or *branes*, but they are performed with an Indian posture and often interspersed with original combinations. Most of the formations are longways, sometimes quite elaborate and of probable European provenience; but the *Negritos* dance proceeds both in lines and circles, and the *Voladores* always in a circle. They lack the primal vigor of the Central European combat rites; often they are subdued, even puppetlike in style. In this respect they differ from the *Concheros* dances with their intensity and frequent virtuosity. Often they stress the comic scenes.

Except for the horse, a snake, and the bird symbolism, these dramas do not feature animals. Special dramas, however, portray bulls, tigers, and other beasts.

In these three types of dances, the *jarabes*, *mitotes*, and sacred *danzas*, cultural admixtures are apparent even up to the period of fusion. The *jarabes*, which owe their existence to incentive from Central Europe, betray their Indian environment only in the general style and in an occasional step. The patterns, most of the steps, and the music derive from modern Europe; the music utilizes European instruments, guitarres, fiddles, or even pianos or bands, all in vivacious tempo. The costumes are native or regional blends of Indian and colonial styles. The *mitotes* usually adhere to native steps and music for voice, drum, gourds, earthbow, though the costumes may be the pan-Mexican *calzones*. The *Concheros* developed their blend during the early colonial period. The combat dramas, despite their medieval Spanish costumes and simple Morris-like flute tunes, and in spite of their name, nevertheless incorporate much native sentiment. As has been suggested before, they represent sixteenth century reinterpretations of extant rites, very much like the *Moriscas* of Yugoslavia's coasts.

3. STRATA AND BLENDS

A full interpretation of the analogies between the dance cultures of the two continental cores would require the assistance of experts on religion, history, the graphic arts, and other features of environment. The present modest suggestions make no such pretensions, but will call only upon a few mythological associations and a few facts of history.

The three dominant dance types in both areas are characteristic of three cultural "layers": the popular dances belong to modern urban life, the rounds to a florescent all-embracing period, now preserved mostly in rural areas, the combats to prehistoric cults preserved by the peasantry. The couple dances developed in Europe within the last 150 years and were brought to the New World about 1850, probably via Spain; exact replicas of them predominate among urban mestizos and imaginative blends on the ranches. One of them has bounced back to Europe as "that Brazilian dance, the *Raspa*."⁵⁴ The process in Yugoslavia and Mexico seems to have been similar with regard to the gradual acceptance and incorporation of this choreographic invasion. In the formally similar choral rounds, the process differed: in Central Europe it spread from the southeastern classical cultures, well before the Christian era, and suffered many a sea change even as late as the Turkish invasions of the sixteenth century; the *kolo* is now the property of the entire population. In Mexico the *mitote* was probably

native, and it has in the course of the past four centuries retreated to a last outpost in the western mountains. The combat dances suffered a similar Christianization, in Europe at the time of the crusades, in Mexico in the sixteenth century; but the European versions, once a widespread cult of the first inhabitants, have their last stronghold in remote mountain villages. In Mexico the cult probably came from the North as late as the twelfth century, as an ancient Aztec legacy, and survives as a widespread blend.

Within the strata, the analogies of function give food for thought. The frankly secular newest layer poses no problems, but the older, often composite forms suggest growth through several periods and several religions. The chain dances of Europe issued from an agricultural region and in part still serve rain deities, derived probably from Iranian religion.⁵⁵ They encountered local conditions and beliefs and, later, a series of invasions by Greek and Roman Catholicism, Mohammedanism, and Protestantism, with both destructive and constructive effects, formal modifications, calendric and conceptual adjustments. The Aztec linked serpentine mostly celebrated and still serve agricultural activities. Xipe Totec, Cinteotl, and Xilonen were Toltec deities adopted into the pantheon of the Aztec invaders.⁵⁶ They and their cults certainly preceded the eighth century Toltec occupation of Teotihuacan; perhaps they came to this area with the Toltecs or were derived from the more southerly Maya-Quiché. During the past four centuries they have suffered adaptations both to Roman Catholic theology and to semi-pagan calendric observances.

The Macedonian combat rite took its name from Slavic deities of the water; the Roumanian and Northwestern European brotherhoods have forgotten the object of their cult but the practices themselves suggest sun worship and animal sacrifices. The Aztec combat dances were used largely in the worship of Huitzilopochtli, god of sun and war in the original pantheon which they brought from the "North" (our present great Southwest). For Europe the episodes of resurrection and healing are traced to the Dionysos-Osiris complex, but may echo a more primitive, forgotten faith. In Mexico such episodes, now part of *Moriscas*, formed part of the fiestas for Quetzalcoatl. Thus in the realm of mythological associations the relative recentness of New World events and better preserved records might help in the reconstruction and analysis of Slavic prehistoric ritualism.

As to the wider diffusion of these complexes, the combat rites of men's societies, still insufficiently studied in the New World, do not seem to equal the European ones in the extent of recurrence of compound features. Separate aspects of this drama occur in different rites of shamanistic cure, puberty initiation, war preparation or victory, and animal worship. The symbolic battle of Huitzilopochtli, the sun with the stars, lacks, in the first place, the other features found in the *Calușar*, and, in the second place, any equivalent elsewhere. Only among some primitive tribes of South America, such as the Venezuelan Maipure, can one find combinations of demonology, initiation, and masked battle, as in the *Máuari*.⁵⁷ These probably autochthonous rites may give clues to the prototype of the *Calușar*.

The Indian choral rounds, however, spread as far as those of Europe and are still spreading and developing. The chain dance, once flourishing but now rare in Mexico, remains the predominant dance form of the Woodland agriculturalists of the United States. The civilized tribes of our Southeast have shared many ritual features with the

ancient Mexicans by migration and by repeated waves of influence right into historic times.⁵⁸ Fragments of these tribes, still resident in their original homes, such as the Cherokee, continue to meander in counterclockwise rounds; while the mass of the peoples has taken the ceremonies and dances to Oklahoma, and the northern agricultural Iroquois adhere to a large and varied repertoire of such rounds. The *mitote* type is continuing its northwesterly diffusion to the Great Lakes and Plains.⁵⁹ The distribution of patterns is like that of the *kolo* type. On both continents the counterclockwise open rounds are identified with southeastern agrarians, closed sunwise circuits with northern hunters; they are blended in a marginal area. Again, as in Yugoslavia, so in the Woodlands: men and women dance separately in the oldest rites; in the next oldest the men precede the women in the same line; in semi-secular dances they alternate in the line; only under contemporary White influence have they learned to swing as couples.⁶⁰

The startling similarities of patterns and processes, of style and function—with the only conspicuous contrasts in the greater complexity and diffusion of the European dances and the absence of wedding and occupational drama in America—bring up the question of an actual influence of the Old World on the New World rounds. A prehistoric association by way of Asia is not impossible when one considers the prevalence of counterclockwise open rounds and stick dances in India⁶¹ and the wide diffusion of other features such as the hobby-horse, which migrated from England to Java,⁶² and the serpent cult.⁶³ However, such a theory would require better evidence. It is more likely that only the modern forms grew out of direct communication and that the old patterns developed independently under similar impetus of agrarian cultures in the case of choral rounds, and, in the case of the combats, at similar stages of belief in demons. The variations in steps and geometric patterns as well as the combinations of rites developed in the course of many centuries under many successive influences, just as the populations of the supernatural pantheons multiplied with each new invasion or migration. In Central Europe they are more varied and complex because this area has been longer and more frequently overrun than has Middle America.

At the time of the Spanish Conquest, the American tribes had arrived at a cultural and choreographic stage similar to that of the Balkans some 2,000 years ago. To this day some of the peripheral tribes may give us a picture of the cults of the most ancient Slavs or their predecessors. But the Conquest suddenly disrupted the natural processes and superimposed recent Old World patterns on the more archaic Indian forms. The accelerated process is still continuing in Mexico and in other islands of aboriginal American vestiges.

It is worth the attention of both Americanists and Slavicists that the two central cultures show such remarkable analogies, both in stratification and in precise forms—analogs that would not hold good for, say, the Ojibwa and the Slavs, or the Aztecs and the English. It would be worthwhile to investigate parallels in the general cultures which produced these choreographies. Such an inquiry would be particularly illuminating in view of the continuation in America of processes long forgotten in Europe. Only then could we assign to the choreographic comparisons their proper evaluation.

NOTES

¹ This paper is based in part on a lecture given at Wayne University in April, 1954 (in Harry Josselson's Seminar on Mid-European Culture). The descriptions derive mainly from observation and participation—for Mid-Europe in the more recent dances, for Middle America in a large proportion of extant dances. Both firsthand and secondhand materials are supported by literary references. Most of the dances and various general terms, e.g., "round dances," can be found in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach, 2 vols. (New York, 1949-1950), hereafter cited as *Dictionary*. Thanks are due Barbara Lattimer Krader for suggestions on the manuscript and for careful checking of Slavic terms.

² Joan Lawson, *European Folk Dance* (London, 1953), p. 96.

³ Curt Sachs, *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes* (Berlin, 1933), p. 292.

⁴ Sachs, p. 293. Krader mentions an 1830 Prague celebration for Poles.

⁵ Sachs, pp. 254-257.

⁶ Lawson, pp. 101-103; Helen Wolska, *Dances of Poland* (London, 1952), pp. 8-9.

⁷ Gertrude Kurath in *Dictionary*, p. 295.

⁸ Anna Schley Duggan, Jeannette Schlottman, Abbie Rutledge, *Folk Dances of European Countries* (New York, 1948), p. 103.

⁹ Duggan, p. 93.

¹⁰ France Marolt, "Slovene Folk Dances and Folk Music," *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, IV (London, 1952), 4-6. "Sedem koraka" means "seven steps" [Krader].

¹¹ Miron and Carola Grindea, *Dances of Rumania* (London, 1952), p. 8.

¹² "Programme Notes on the Dances and Songs performed at the Yugoslav Music Festival," *JIFMC* (1952), 64.

¹³ Ljubica and Danica Janković, *Narodne Igre* (Folk Dances of Yugoslavia), I-VII (Belgrade, 1934-1952), 35, 39-40, 50-51, 61 [English Summary].

¹⁴ Roman Jakobson, "Slavic Mythology," *Dictionary*, p. 1026.

¹⁵ Marolt, p. 7.

¹⁶ Marolt, p. 5.

¹⁷ Ljubica and Danica Janković, *Dances of Yugoslavia* (London, 1952), pp. 20-21.

¹⁸ Janković, *Dances . . .*, p. 8.

¹⁹ Violet Alford and Rodney Gallop, *The Traditional Dance* (London, 1935), p. 60. The Grindeas, p. 14, give the meaning of *braul* as "belt" in Roumanian (from the belt grasped during the dance).

²⁰ Béla Bartók and Albert B. Lord, *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs* (New York, 1951), pp. 66-70; Janković, *Narodne . . .*, pp. 10-11, 13, 18, 43.

²¹ Gallop, p. 54; W. A. V. in *Ciba-Review* (Sept., 1947), 2201.

²² Lawson, p. 21; Gallop, p. 51.

²³ Personal communication, Einar Haugen.

²⁴ Here, however, witches' dances were "widdershins," against the sun. Lawson, p. 24; *Dictionary*, p. 958.

²⁵ Sachs, pp. 228 ff.; Grindea, p. 15.

²⁶ Janković, *Narodne . . .*, pp. 24-25.

²⁷ Emanueil Čučkov, "Contenu idéologique et procès rythmique de la danse populaire Macédonienne," *JIFMC*, IV (1952), 41.

²⁸ "Programme Notes . . .," *JIFMC* (1952), 62-63.

²⁹ Gallop, p. 152.

³⁰ Grindea, p. 16.

³¹ Janković, *Narodne . . .*, p. 56.

³² Gertrude P. Kurath, "Mexican Moriscos," *JAF*, LXII (1949), 94-99. See also Richard Wolfram, *Die Volkstänze in Österreich und Verwandte Tänze in Europa* (Salzburg, 1951), pp. 75-83.

³³ *Dictionary*, p. 947. The correlation of dance and archaeology was discussed with Homer Thomas.

³⁴ Roman Jakobson, *Dictionary*, 1027; Fritz Flor, "Die Indogermanenfrage in der Völkerkunde," *Germanen und Indogermanen*, ed. H. Arntz (Heidelberg, 1936), I, 92-93, 123.

- ³⁵ Gallop, pp. 138-140.
- ³⁶ Theodor Gaster, "Semitic Mythology," *Dictionary*, pp. 991-993.
- ³⁷ Kurath, *Dictionary*, p. 295.
- ³⁸ Mela Sedillo, *Mexican and New Mexican Folk Dances* (Albuquerque, 1935), pp. 7-8.
- ³⁹ Sedillo, pp. 8-13.
- ⁴⁰ Frances Gillmor, "Spanish Texts of Three Dance Dramas from Mexican Villages," *University of Arizona Bulletin*, XIII, No. 4, 41-83.
- ⁴¹ "Hence, we venture to say that our Spanish-Colonial dances are the offspring of Continental dances introduced into Mexico after the Polish Revolution when there arrived in the sister Republic a number of Polish émigrés, later reinforced by others, during the ephemeral empire of Maximilian and Carlotta" [that is, 1864-1867]. This would also account for the popularity of the waltz—Aurora Lucero-White, Eunice Hauskins, Helene Mareau, *Folk-Dances of the Spanish-Colonials of New Mexico* (Santa Fe, 1940), p. 11.
- ⁴² Lucile K. Czarnowski, *Dances of Early California Days* (Palo Alto, 1950).
- ⁴³ Sedillo; Lucero-White.
- ⁴⁴ John Alden Mason, "The Tepehuan and the other Aborigines of the Mexican Sierra Madre Occidental," *America Indígena*, VIII (Mexico, 1948), 297-298; Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico* (London, 1903), I, 509; II, 461, 473.
- ⁴⁵ Wendell C. Bennett, *The Tarahumara* (Chicago, 1935), pp. 243-244.
- ⁴⁶ Gertrude P. Kurath, "Los Concheros," *JAF*, LIX (1946), 387-399. Of the steps tabulated on pp. 396-397, the closest analogies are the even skip, deep knee bend, turn, *pas de basque*, grapevine, *grue*.
- ⁴⁷ Kurath, "Dance Acculturation," in *Heritage of Conquest*, ed. Sol Tax (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), p. 238; based on Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las Cosas de Nueva España* (Mexico, ca. 1580; ed. Robredo, 1938), II 128.
- ⁴⁸ Alfonso Caso, *La Religión de los Aztecas* (México, D. F., 1945), p. 65.
- ⁴⁹ Sahagún, pp. 199-200.
- ⁵⁰ Caso, p. 66.
- ⁵¹ Roberto Barlow, "Piezas Tetrales en Lengua Nahuatl," *Boletín Bibliográfico de Antropología Americana*, XI (Mexico, D. F., 1949), 154-164; R. Barlow and B. MacAfee, "Un Cuaderno de Marquesas," *El México Antiguo* (Mexico, D. F., 1947), VI, No. 5, 392-404.
- ⁵² Frances Toor, *Mexican Folkways* (New York, 1947), p. 354.
- ⁵³ Toor, pp. 319-323. See also *Dictionary*, "Voladores."
- ⁵⁴ Lawson (above, n. 2), p. 77.
- ⁵⁵ Jakobson, *Dictionary*, p. 1025.
- ⁵⁶ Caso, pp. 42, 45.
- ⁵⁷ Lisandro Alvarado, "Música y Danza entre los Aborígenes Venezolanos," *Revista Nacional de Cultura*, L (Caracas, 1945), pp. 34-35.
- ⁵⁸ Ralph L. Beals, "The Comparative Ethnology of Northern Mexico before 1750," *Ibero-Americana*, I-IV (1932-1933), 96-147; James B. Griffin, "Culture Periods in Eastern United States Archaeology," *Archaeology of Eastern United States* (Chicago, 1952), pp. 352-364, esp. 360-361; Alex. D. Krieger, "An Inquiry into Supposed Mexican Influences on a Prehistoric 'Cult' in the Southeastern United States," *American Anthropologist*, XLVII (1945), 483-515. Influences radiated from the Southwest in earliest times, from Mexico perhaps via Texas from 600 A.D. (Middle Woodland) to the 'Southern Cult' at the dawn of history.
- ⁵⁹ Kurath, "Pan-Indianism in Great Lakes Tribal Festivals," forthcoming in *JAF*.
- ⁶⁰ Kurath, *Seneca Music and Dance Style*, MS. in Library of the American Philosophical Society (1951).
- ⁶¹ Faubion Bowers, *The Dance in India* (New York, 1953), pp. 118-121, 144 (Manipuri Lai Haraoba, Lairen Mathek or god-serpent zigzag with jumping leg swings); p. 156 (Kollattum of South India).
- ⁶² Lewis Spence, *Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game, and Rhyme* (London, 1947), pp. 143-144.
- ⁶³ Marius Barbeau, "The Old World Dragon in America," *Indian Tribes of Aboriginal America*, ed. Sol Tax (Chicago, 1952), pp. 115-122.

THE MUTE LANGUAGE IN THE TRADITION AND ORAL LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH SLAVS¹

BY BRANISLAV RUSIĆ

IT is evident from a fairly large number of published sources and living folk beliefs, and from certain types of literary creations (fables, tales, songs), that all the branches of the South Slavs—Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Bulgars—imagine that the entire animal and vegetable world and all things and phenomena in nature, even when they lose the signs of life, can express their feelings and thoughts by means of certain utterances, sounds, or rustlings. They also believe that these means of communication can in certain cases be brought to humans, and that this special knowledge is the property from the beginning of certain supernatural beings, saints, rulers, and various other persons, specified or unspecified. It is further believed that this power of expressing thoughts and feelings can be received, or won, under specific conditions even by certain ordinary people.

This spiritual method of conveying meaning has received various names, or terms, among the South Slavs, some of which are special, while others are more general in scope: "the ox language," "the frog language," "the jackdaw language," "the swallow language," "the bird language," "the animal language" (or "speech"), "every language" (or "all languages"), "the language which is stuck on," "the bribeless language," and "the secret language." There are also the expressions "silence," "the language that is not," "mute language," "the mute voice," "the language of the mutes," and, finally, "mute language" (*nemušti jezik*) in various dialectal and colloquial forms. This expression is found among all Serbs and Montenegrins and with some Croats and Macedonians, while other branches of the South Slavs (except for one closely-related example among the Slovenes) do not have it.

Of the material in which only this term appears, all are included who know this language in any of its forms, general or specific, as mentioned above. It is clear from its first word, the origin of which is uncertain, that the expression means a language which has been invented—in which one "mutes," deadens sound, or mumbles, but does not speak. Its sounds are like those which mute people make, or, in general, the sounds of animals, birds, and others heard in nature. Because of the unusual construction of the word *nemušti*, with the Church Slavonic suffix *-ušti*, and because of the meaning that the people associate with the concept of "mute language" in the material, this expression corresponds most precisely to the entire belief in a speech of the animate and inanimate world and natural phenomena, and of certain beings and persons. It is truly *nomen est omen*, and it is difficult to find a proper substitute for it in any language outside Serbo-Croatian.²

The South Slavic peoples believe that the mute language is known or used, first of all, by the entire animal kingdom, without regard to species or their relations to

human beings. All wild and domestic animals use it, especially snakes of various sizes and functions, but also stags, horses, donkeys, oxen, sheep, dogs, wolves, cats, hedgehogs, weasels, badgers, mice, frogs, crows, jackdaws, roosters and hens, geese, ducks, eagles, screech owls, sparrows, pigeons, swallows, nightingales, flies, ants, bugs, and house vermin. There is even a fair number of examples of plants using the mute language—grass, trees (with or without fruit), their branches and leaves, and the entire forest. This language is also known by every “mute” thing: pits, caves, stones, the ground, water, rivers. It is used by beings similar to humans who have had it from the beginning. These include certain supernatural beings—God, the Devil, *vilas* (female mountain spirits in Yugoslav folklore), dragons, witches—and persons of unusual appearance, such as the grey-haired old man who is also hairy as a vampire, or a certain tsar living on a mysterious island, or the man and woman living in a bottomless pit. To this category belong certain saints (the Serbian Saint Sava) and rulers, some of their sons (Tsar Solomon, the tsar’s son Bojan, and Kraljević Marko), the heroes of folksongs (Grujica Novaković, Kata Katranica from Katran town, the bride of Bogdan, the good hero), and living snake-keepers (Laza Dikulov, Koce Simić, and Vučić Pajković). Certain nameless persons also occur in the tradition with this capacity: a man, a person, a servant, a grandson, the man from Konavli, the stroller on Velebit mountain, an eminent person and his companion from Piva going over Durmitor mountain, hunters on Mosor mountain.

South Slavic material on the mute language provides precise information on the time and motive, or reason, for the appearance of this knowledge only in certain cases, and generalizes concerning the rest. It is usually believed that everything in nature, animate and inanimate, spoke on the day Christ was baptized in the River Jordan, and that domestic animals now speak on Christmas Eve about midnight, on the eve of St. John’s Day (24 June), or on the Feast of the Annunciation. Those who know the mute language also use this speech on other occasions than specified holidays—exceptionally, of course, but whenever the need arises. In some cases the sources also indicate what sort of feelings and thoughts are thus expressed. Snakes are most apt to speak with a person to beg him to save them from a fire or a fence; or else they make utterance, of their own initiative, when they see their lost first-born return alive, at which time they reward the well-doer. Fish speak to thank their rescuer, or to advise someone how to win something of profit.

The same reasons also bring four-legged animals to use the mute language. Domestic livestock speak at a specified time of the fate of their masters. Of these, horses and colts are most apt to express themselves, usually in a sharp tone and most frequently with mares, berating them for being slow. The mares answer that it is hard for them because they are swollen with child and are “carrying a pregnant woman,” i.e., a heavier load than the horse. In one case a colt speaks to its mother when it is afraid that a snake will poison its master. In other examples they ask food and water from someone whom they meet, or they are angry at a rooster. The donkey and the ox argue with each other as to who shall persuade whom to be harnessed for ploughing. The cow asks her calf whether it is hungry, and the calf asks the cow if she is tired. Livestock in general begin to answer questions from their master and to grieve for his wife, either when they are weary from carrying a load, or in honor of the Christ child. The ewe expresses anger at the rooster who is happy when his lord

is going to die, or when the shepherds prepare to slaughter her first and only lamb. Dogs speak forth when they are hungry, or in answer to a question from their master, or in anger at wolves who want to kill sheep; on occasions they agree to divide the prey. Sometimes they, too, scold the rooster, who rejoices when his master awaits death. Mice try in their speech to persuade the tsar's son to protect them from weasels.

Birds talk with each other, or address animals or humans directly (often unintentionally), or speak out of sympathy for innocent or poor people, and then do good deeds for them. Roosters speak fairly often, usually complaining to their master about his wife's not feeding them; or they say the plague has struck the village of Bani in Upper Konavli. Also, they mock their lord when he is preparing to reveal to his wife that he knows the mute language; they say that he will then die, and they advise him how to act in order to stay alive. Eagles tell where the tsar's gold is buried. Ravens, doves, swallows, nightingales, also speak of hidden treasure. Among the insects, ants use the mute language when they ask the tsar's servants to save them from fire, or when they sing happily in the sun. Plants at one time spoke to humans and told their names and uses (especially for healing), or they proffered help, or honored and entertained a person. "Dumb things" may also answer a question as to what is hidden in them. For example, a stone has told what sickness it could cure, while a river has complained of its fate that no one drank its water. It is not always explicitly stated why the master of the mute language in human form or similar to a human is called upon to use his unusual knowledge. Tsar Solomon himself asked advice of a bird. Marko Kraljević called for the help of his blood sister, the *vila*. Gruzica Novaković looked for his horse so that with its help he could more easily kill Turks and his traitorous wife. Others of their contemporaries used the mute language to do good deeds for their dear ones, or for amusement with animals.

Animals and birds communicate by the mute language with sounds through the throat or mouth or beak, and for this the South Slavs have invented many words. Inanimate things make a kind of roar or emit "various fantastic sounds and a kind of buzzing." In an economy of thought, the South Slavic peoples say for the other speakers of the mute language in nature that they speak in their own sound. For human speakers it is said that when they address animate beings in nature, their mute language is expressed in certain sounds or rustlings which resemble the sounds of the creatures they address, e.g., whistling, trilling, whispering, squeaking, buzzing, or moaning. There is also a mute language which is produced with the help of an object of nature (whistling into a short stick) or by various instruments: a flute (*kaval*) or a reed pipe (*diple*).

But even born possessors of the mute language from the world of nature take their model from the speech of humans in order to make themselves understood. For this reason human beings in the material studied were amazed that a snake, for example, "speaks like a person" with them, for they had never heard before that it "could speak like a person." This rests on a belief that at one time all animals "spoke like human beings"—"but later God took speech away from them so that man could differentiate himself from animals." According to this, the mute language is, in spite of the word "language," an imaginary means for communication, not employing a single word which would be understandable to all people; it would contain countless

sounds and noises, which certain individuals express by grave vowels, or stops, spirants, affricates, or palatalized consonants. Although secret, it is not the same as the so-called "secret languages" (*tajni jezici*) which have their own words but are understood only by a narrow circle of initiates.

Only occasionally can people who are not born with the knowledge of the mute language learn it. It is believed that at one time every man could at least understand the mute language, but that people lost it because of their sins. Now it can be understood "only by someone who is good," and only in a certain specific situation. Folk belief limits the number of good people; they are narrowed down to men only. Even of these, only certain men with special spiritual qualities, interests, and possessions can obtain or win the mute language. They must be obedient, honorable, and faithful.

These qualities are attributed to shepherds, servants, helpers, ploughmen, woodcutters, and certain others, most of them poor. They always perform good deeds for unlucky creatures of nature to whom the mute language has been known from birth. There are only a few examples where certain humans can also come to the knowledge of the mute language by their own determination and adroitness, and when they carry out certain difficult or forbidden tasks.

The mute language can be accepted as a gift, or it can be won or earned. In the first case, those who know the language give a man something which comes out of them, or is their own possession, and the receiver takes it away in himself or keeps it by him. In the second case, the man himself arrives at the means from which he takes the knowledge of the language. The mute language is presented to men as a gift by supernatural beings in human or human-like form (God, the Devil, *vilas*, a dragon, a man of unusual appearance, the tsar of the mysterious island, the man and woman in the bottomless pit), and especially by snakes or snake rulers. The mute language is a gift which is not received or earned without good deeds (most often saving the one who knows it, or his closest kinsman, from death or danger) or persistence; for it is a mystical accomplishment.

It is not always indicated in the sources how supernatural beings carry out the giving of the mute language. It is known only that the man of unusual appearance gives his ring to a servant who has done a good deed for the man's son, and from this the servant wins the knowledge of the language. The tsar of the desert island gives his shepherd benefactor a small stone from under his tongue, and when the shepherd places it under his own tongue he understands the language. The parents from the bottomless pit blow into the mouth of a shepherd for the help he has given them, thus endowing him with the language. Among animals, the mute language is most often given by snakes, or snake rulers, or by Asklepius snakes, which are said to suck milk from cows. In a few cases the snake, or some related reptile, gives the mute language without any action at all. In all other cases the action is specified. One may give the language by his breath, either by blowing through a *kaval* into the ears or the mouth of a shepherd, or else by blowing directly into the shepherd's mouth three times, with the shepherd doing the same in return three times. One may do it with his spittle, either spitting into the mouth of the shepherd, or by each actor doing it to the other three times directly or through a flute (*svirala*); or the snake may put his spit on the hunter's fist and the hunter puts it in his mouth. The snake may give the language through something unrecognised (which the shepherd eats), or by

various grasses which are eaten, or by a hazel switch (with which he strikes the poor benefactor over the head), or by a kiss on the tongue (to the man who has rescued his daughter). The mute language can also be obtained from a dead snake, especially one from a hazel bush; after the snake is baked or cooked, the man drinks a little of the juice or fluid, or eats the snake's heart. Some receive the mute language when they have with them objects from a snake, such as a precious stone which is found in the snake's head, or the ring under the tongue of the snake tsar. One also acquires the mute language when a fish that is found in a forest is cooked and boiled, and then tasted. It is also acquired if one licks or tastes a frog which was found during ploughing.

A person can obtain the mute language also through plants, especially through various fruits (the orphan eats strawberries on the mountain), herbs, or grass. Whoever manages to get the flower or seed of a fern, or has one without knowing it, will speak the mute language. For this purpose, it is believed, many people seek these parts of ferns at midnight on St. John's day, as well as for various magical powers against witches and evil forces which are contained in the flower and the seed. A person can learn the mute language if he plucks various unknown flowers in the morning of St. John's day, or if he finds a four-leaf clover at any time on that holiday. A person who cooks mistletoe from a hazel bush in which a snake has its nest, and drinks the liquid, or one who eats a grass which certain persons have cared for secretly will understand the mute language. In isolated cases it is said that the language is won by means of true magical acts. Thus, for example, when some wood is cut every day from one Christmas Eve to the next, and one takes it among the sheep on the last day, or if small tables are prepared for sleeping for the same length of time and then carried among the domestic animals and people sit down on the tables, the speech of the animals will be understood.

Since gaining the mute language is fraught with difficulties, the possessor wins great profit from it. He becomes rich, leaves his former hard life and work, marries the person he desires (often even the tsar's daughter), or acquires many occult arts. Yet actually because of such knowledge he has many new difficulties in life, especially if he shows those closest to him that he knows the mute language. Most frequently there is conflict with the inquisitive wife, who notices certain changes in her husband (he laughs for no apparent reason in her presence, or kills the young dogs and saves the old one), and she wants to know why. Here the man who knows the mute language, frightened by the threat of the donor that he will die the moment he gives away the mysterious knowledge, even comes to his deathbed, from which he is most often rescued by a rooster and his scornful advice. In cases where the man gives away his secret, he loses the knowledge of the mute language on the spot, and with it all the good things he has won; and sometimes he dies. The language is also withdrawn if people lose the means by which they can understand it (the flower or seed of the fern, the pollen of certain flowers), even though the loss is not their fault. In addition to this natural type of loss, the mute language may also be taken away by force. This is done by those who gave it, by those from whom the means for understanding was taken secretly, or by rulers, elders, or some kind of superior in general. It is accomplished with the help of various objects, specified or unspecified: the witch takes the remainder of the fat off her servant's tongue with a knife; the hunters of Mosor

Mountain force their boy to open his mouth "and they pull something out from under his tongue"; a stroller on Mount Velebit "takes something out of his pocket, and then crosses himself on the forehead with it"; a distinguished man on Mount Durmitor and a snake-keeper from Pelješac spit into the mouth of their companion, a man from Piva, and their helper—and thus all lose the mute language. Primarily, the loss and withdrawal of the mute language takes place after certain magical acts, or after the disappearance of the magical means, or after a certain time has elapsed in relation to certain religious holidays.

If we examine the data on the belief in the mute language among the South Slavs, it will be seen that these people, together with others, have ascribed the power of expressing feelings and thoughts to members of animate and inanimate nature. The chief facts which have, from the distant past, given all peoples reason to believe that not only animals and birds but also plants, and even things and incorporeal phenomena in nature, have this knowledge—which is an integral part of their life—are movement and voice, sound or noise, perhaps even only one of these two elements. A man sees many similarities to himself when he notices the movements or hears the voices of the members of animate or inanimate nature and natural phenomena, on the basis of centuries of direct interrelation with this outer world upon which his existence has depended in many ways. He creates new concepts linked with these basic elements of life, and distills them through his center of thinking. Through the organs of speech and words which serve him for communication he succeeds, by means of his own reason, in collecting and condensing one broad thought into a short definite form and in expressing it with greater or less precision. For this reason the voices, sounds, or noises of animate or inanimate nature and of natural phenomena mean to him a speech or language similar to that of the human. Hence people "translate" these tones into their own words and various human expressions. Such a personification of animate and inanimate nature and of natural phenomena has its roots in the age-old human belief that the whole world outside of man, known and unknown, has a living body and a soul or spirit. This is a belief in animism (in Karsten's sense of the word).

In their constant struggle for existence, men have used certain animistic concepts as tools to win various good things for themselves. Thus they created magic, the active element, the "technique" or "strategy" of animism. By this element one came to the animistic mute language, through which, according to folk belief, one attained many profitable and rare good things in human life. In the act of arriving at the mysterious knowledge of the mute language, and the improvement of life by means of it, the people pointed out the difficult road along which the key to isolated secrets of nature was to be found. They named many creatures or objects in nature through which one could come to the mute language or win the knowledge of it. They managed to create an inseparable link between every radiator of the mute language, and to explain every act of one by an act of the other. By progressing from a general belief that whoever came into relationship by blood with beings or things to which the mute language is ascribed as an inherent knowledge would himself win this means of expressing feelings and thoughts, the people found their link and relationship directly or indirectly with everything they saw, heard, or felt around themselves. According to

folk belief the snake, the most frequent source of the mute language, has a link also with humans, animals, plants, and supernatural beings, and therefore its body, its possessions, and everything connected with it radiate the mute language. This link and this knowledge are won by people through magic acts.

The belief in the mute language among the South Slavs clearly establishes it as the permanent property of the world outside of man. Of beings similar to man, the mute language is possessed by saints, tsars or their sons, magnates, eminent and mysterious persons, i.e., persons who are far from ordinary in appearance, position, life, wealth, and in intellectual and psychic qualities. Opposed to them are the ordinary people (men only) who can, under certain specific conditions and with many difficulties, acquire this knowledge which is so unusual for a human. These are people from the lower strata of human society, hired workers for rich or powerful lords (shepherds, servants, helpers, people who are poor and alone) who have for consolation qualities of peaceful and subservient people (goodness, naiveté, respect, sympathy, faithfulness, reliability, obedience, obligingness, industry). Yet even when they manage to achieve the requirements for receiving an elevated knowledge like the mute language, the givers refuse them and say that this knowledge is not for them, i.e., for ordinary people. Here one sees a great social cleavage between the two groups. The desire of the lower stratum to come to the good things which the upper stratum has is reflected in the manner of receiving and taking away the mute language, in the winning of the conditions or means for a better life.

The belief in the mute language which is found among the South Slavs is also known among many other peoples all over Europe, Asia, Africa, and the other continents. If we compare the South Slavic material with that of other peoples, it is evident that there are no striking differences, whether in those who know the mute language, in those persons who win it, in the beings who give it, or in the way of learning and losing it, or in any other general factors, or even in certain details which create traditions and folk oral literature. Therefore the South Slavic material can also serve, being part of the whole, as an example and a model for the drawing of conclusions on the origin of the tales of the mute language in general.

Benfey was the first to express the thought that tales about the mute language originated from a single source in India, from which they spread through the remaining lands of the Old World. His view was accepted by Thimme, Von der Leyen, and Aarne, and later also by Frazer. August Marx and Klinger did not concur with this, believing that the first tale of the mute language originated in ancient Greece. Some thought that the creation of the tale was linked with the Buddhists (Benfey), others with the Moslems (Reinisch, and Aarne in part, while Müller denied it). On the basis of evidence made available up to the present from ethnology and related sciences, it is known that there are more than a few well developed tales about the mute language among almost all the peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa. In the Americas and in Australia, however, there are only beliefs or traditions and brief anecdotes about the speech of beings, things, and natural phenomena, which do not coincide in all respects with the handling of the mute language in the European, Asian, and African tales.

Some scholars have attempted to ascertain the period of origin of the tales about the mute language, both on the basis of the first written records and by examining their content. A tale from Asia is attributed to the third and fourth century, another

to the beginning of the thirteenth century, a third to the beginning of the fourteenth century, but with details which go back to earlier times. The first tale in Europe about the mute language is found in written records from 1520, the second from about thirty years later. One Serbian writer has gone still further back, and, on the basis of astrological evidence in the tale on this theme from the collection by Vuk Karadžić, asserts that it originated "about the 9th century B.C."

All these noteworthy observations on the source and period of creation of the first tales on the mute language are not without value, but they would come far closer to the truth if their originators took into account the basic and most important factors affecting the origin of these beliefs and tales.

It has long been established in science that the belief in the mute language is a more or less complex form of animism, and, in my opinion, that the language is acquired by means of magic. Many scholars have stated that animism is the oldest form of belief and religion and that it arose in primitive communities engaged in hunting and gathering at a time which goes back to the Paleolithic Age. From these basic beliefs in the speech of animate and inanimate nature and natural phenomena around man, various details have developed in the course of time and human development through human perception and reasoning. Thus spiritual creations of greater or less complexity have evolved from the simple to the complex, with various sized steps forward or backward. They began from beliefs, passing through traditions, narratives, stories, and fables to well developed tales about the mute language, at a time and place when the need and conditions arose for the tying together of all the new concepts and elements into a single whole, together with the old and basic ones. Dreams, with their colorful images of the experiences and desires of individual persons, undoubtedly contributed much to the formation of a greater and more rounded whole. It was natural that the creators of these expanded units first included, in addition to themselves, animals and birds; for they had had links with them from time immemorial, living from them or fearing them. Later they also brought in the entire milieu in which their activity flourished.

But social stimuli were also inevitably needed, in addition to natural factors, for the creation of tales about the mute language. Such stimuli were provided by the striving of people from backward and poor classes to reach higher positions which would also offer them means of a better life. These people would see in the mute language a means of advancement and of acquiring many good things. This striving and need created, maintained, developed, and changed the tales about the mute language among various peoples and ethnic groups in regard to the workings of nature and human environment. Human need was to preserve these tales until the realization came that they were unreal. These elements and causes had always been common to all places. Thus there is ground for the statement that tales of the mute language among many folk units were created and took form along this path of development. These isolated sources were equalized with each other by the mingling of peoples. For this reason one cannot speak of one established archetype of the tale of the mute language, the source of all those current today, but only of several similar ones that are simple, very old forms from various unknown points of origin on the connected continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, especially in the places of the oldest seats of culture. The tales about the mute language in themselves cannot be a reliable source for establishing

their time of origin, because of changes in the course of development. Still less can the dates of their transcription serve this purpose. On the basis of the animals and people mentioned, of the relations between donors and recipients, and of men and women, one can only indicate the possibility that the tales on this subject began to be created at the time of the domestication of animals (i.e., in the second period of development of primitive society), at the time of transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, at a time of unequal relations in society. But since even these periods did not begin and continue everywhere for the same length of time, it cannot be said that the origin of the tales about the mute language goes back to one narrow period, for it was earlier in some places and later in others.

Something should be said as to why there are no true tales of the mute language in the Americas and Australia like those in the Old World. At a time before the end of the Paleolithic and at the beginning of the Neolithic Period, it is believed that America began to be populated by inhabitants from the continent of Asia, and the same no doubt happened to Australia across the intervening islands. These immigrants must have brought with them a few developed animistic concepts about the mute language. These concepts must have acquired their present form in the course of centuries in the new land. They are different in their externals because continental isolation was a hindrance to mixing and equalization with the concepts of people on the nearest continent, whose basic understanding of the mute language was the same. Where mixture was easier, in the area around the Bering Strait, the similarity of belief is more marked. For this reason there is one single belief about the mute language in the world today, but with two types of folk literary creation. In Europe, Asia, and Africa there are well developed tales about the mute language, while in the Americas and Australia we find only brief anecdotes about the speech of beings, plants, and natural phenomena.

In connection with the whole question of the origin of the belief in the mute language throughout the world, something can be said in respect to the South Slavs. According to those writers who have delved most deeply into the Slavic past, it is known that the ancestors of the Slavs still had an animistic faith at the end of the pre-Christian era. Animistic beliefs survive even today among all the Slavs, including the Southern Slavs, who have changed and added to them in the course of their sojourn on the Balkan peninsula in contact with the earlier settlers and later arrivals. This is made evident by the present-day form of belief in the mute language. Its general preservation, moreover, gives double value to the whole material on the subject; on this basis one can speak not only of the origin, antiquity, and development of the concepts and tales about the mute language, but also of the fact that among the South Slavs the oldest faith was animism, accompanied by magic.

NOTES

¹ This paper, translated from the Serbo-Croatian by Barbara Lattimer Krader, summarizes a more extensive study, for which the author has consulted these works: SOURCES. *Arhiv za Povjestnicu Jugoslavensku*, II (Zagreb, 1852), 357; *Bosanska Vila*, XII (Sarajevo, 1897), 247; Olaf Broch, "Die Dialekte des südlichsten Serbiens," *Schriften der Balkankommission, Linguistische Abteilung*, III (Vienna, 1903), 212; Baudouin de Courtenay, "Materialy dlia iuzhnoslavianskoi dialektologii i etnografii. II. Obraztsyazyka na govorakh Terskikh Slavian v severovostochnoi

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² In all other languages this speech is most commonly designated as "the language of animals" or "the beast language," although it is actually more complex than this. Divna Veković was the only one to translate *nemušti jezik* as *la langue muette*, which is the closest translation thus far. It would be very useful to have the word *nemušti* adopted as an international term for this type of language, and to say "the *nemušti* (*nemooshtee*) language."

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SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BULGARIAN FOLKSONGS

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IN the early part of this century, Gomme expressed a belief that folklore could be used to corroborate, or enlarge upon, or even correct, historical record.¹ This theory, which follows lines developed by the Grimm brothers, has been attacked and is in general discredited today. However, if a similar method be applied instead to tracing the psychological history of a given people,² it becomes quite evident that folklore, including folksong, yields an impressive mass of data concerning the society in which that folklore had its birth.

Like the cultural anthropologist, the ethnomusicologist must of necessity make deductions concerning the past on the basis of information gathered much later. His deductions, therefore, are not always accurate. Like the tale, the riddle, and the proverb, folk music was learned and memorized by hearing, and transmitted orally; written records are often insufficient, particularly in the case of Bulgaria. The task of the musicologist, as distinguished from the ethnomusicologist, is thus much easier, since he is customarily absorbed with the strictly musical aspects of folk music: he records it, identifies the singer, traces its possible origin, and proceeds with the usual analysis as to type, form, rhythm, comparison with the music of similar or dissimilar cultures, and so on.

The ethnomusicologist, on the other hand, must organize his methods so that his study will shed light on music similar to that which the research of his fellow scholars sheds on economic institutions, social organization, and religion. William R. Bascom, in urging anthropologists to give proper weight to folklore in their cultural studies of any people, said that "since folklore serves to sanction and validate religious, social, political, and economic institutions, and to play an important role as an educative device in their transmission from one generation to another, there can be no thorough analysis of any of these parts of culture which does not give serious consideration to folklore."³ It seems to me that if we were to include folk music in the above statement, no injustice would be done either to folklore or to anthropology. Bascom's own definition of folklore, however, excludes folk music, apparently on the grounds that its medium of transmission is not "the spoken word."⁴

Just as there seems to be no exact agreement as to the definition and meaning of the term folklore,⁵ so there are differences of opinion as to the definition of folk music. Among the many that have been advanced, the definition adopted by the Seventh Conference of the International Folk Music Council at São Paulo, Brazil, 16-22 August 1954, appears to be the most comprehensive.⁶

My conviction of the vivid role that folk music normally plays in village life (par-

ticularly in Bulgarian villages), at the periods when it has been most cherished and enriched, does not stem from objective study alone, although such study has served to strengthen and articulate this conviction. I, like many fellow-Americans of Bulgarian origin, came to this country from a small rural village of Bulgaria where folk music was a daily part of life. My subsequent contacts with and interviews of hundreds of Bulgarian émigrés during and following World War II, in Europe and the United States, indicate that Bulgarian village life, at least until 1946, remained relatively unchanged from very early times. For centuries, then, folk music to the Bulgarian has represented in many instances his attitudes and his emotions, his moral code, his religious aspirations and his world-view—all this in addition to mirroring his customs, traditions, and daily patterns.⁷

The largest portion of a peasant's life, from a purely statistical point of view, is spent at work in the fields or around the house. In Bulgaria men and women share the responsibilities of field work, and the songs they sing to make their chores more bearable are thus sung by both sexes, usually in groups, although one person may sing a verse and then be joined by the rest of the workers. These work songs may vary as to content, but it is safe to state that the love element predominates. The chief purpose of the work song in Bulgarian folk music is to create a more pleasant environment and not, as has been shown to be the case in some countries and for certain occupations, to set a tempo calculated to improve speed and efficiency.⁸ If there were a direct relationship between tempo and task, a Bulgarian harvest would never have been completed, since the traditional songs for harvest time are among the slowest Bulgarian folksongs.

One of the greatest psychological values of work songs for the Bulgarian is the creation of a world of make-believe which includes the entire group while the song continues. Escape from monotony and drudgery, day-dreaming of the more romantic sort, and the swifter-seeming passage of time are its ends. The peasant likes to think that hard work has a reward waiting in some form or other. He will secure comfort for his family, a dowry for his daughter, or be able to contribute generously to the church:

ОРАЛ е Стоян, копал е,
и в делник Стоян и в празник,
и на личен ден Великден,
цели ми девет години.
Га беше на десетата,
на ден на личен Великден,
рано в неделя вутрина,
орало му са заплете
у ситно-дребно корене,
че ми е Стоян връхлетял
до три казана имане,
пълни-равни до върше,
до върше с жолти жолтици.

Stoian plowed and hoed
On weekdays and on holidays;
Stoian plowed even on Easter,
Every day for nine long years.
Then in the tenth year
On Easter,
Early on Sunday morning,
Stoian's plow got entangled
In small roots under the ground,
And Stoian then came upon
Three kettles full of money,
Filled to the very top,
Filled with gleaming gold.

Stoian then offered a prayer, promising to build a church for God if He would help Stoian dig the gold. God assures him that, although he has worked on Sundays and holidays, he nevertheless has a pure heart, "as pure as the wing of an angel." Then,

Та му е Господ помогнал,
та си имане извади
и чьорква си му угради
с чисти сребърни диреци
и с позлатени прозорци.

God gave him assistance
So he could dig the money.
Then Stoian erected a church
With columns of pure silver
And with gilded windows.⁹

The work song deals with a variety of subjects, from love and unhappy marriage to patriotism and villainy, nymphs, and sickness. A single harvest song cycle may touch upon the peasant's attitude toward, for instance, nature, religion, family, fellow villagers. Different songs are sung at different times of day: 1. *In the morning, on the way to work*. Subject matter may be the sun, the dew, the mountains, the group, love. (See Ex. 3.) 2. *At noon*. As the women work in the fields, they can hear the sounds of the shepherd's flute in the distance; he is, therefore, the subject of many songs. One relates a competition in harvesting wheat between a young girl and a shepherd. If he is faster, she must marry him; if she is faster, he must give her his flock. (For the record, the girl wins.) 3. *Afternoon*. The group is somewhat impatient and wishes the hot sun would soon set behind the mountains, so they can go home. One song offers a bit of advice: do not judge a prospective wife by the fine knitwear she may display, nor by the clean clothes she wears—they may both be the mother's doing. Judge her instead by her ability to harvest. 4. *At sunset*. Village activities already occupy the thoughts of the tired workers. In one song, Stanka begs the sun to "set behind the mountains and over the waters," and begs "the green forest to grow bigger leaves so that her brother [who has taken to the forest as part of a revolutionist band] will be able to hide and elude the posse."¹⁰ 5. *In the evening, on the way home*. The subject matter is again of a general nature, with a mixture of pathos and humor. For instance, Lala cried three days, because she thought she was too young to marry:

Че азе съм, мале, мъничка,
Мъничка, та па глупава:
Не можа леп да омяса
Не зная гозба да зготва.

Because, Mother, I am too young,
Too young and foolish;
I can neither bake bread,
Nor can I prepare the meals.¹¹

Other folksongs, with appropriate texts, accompany grape-picking, hay-gathering, cheese-making, hoeing, and the like.

During the winter months the village activities center in the homes of the peasants. The *sedénka* and the *tlaká*¹² provide a more intimate atmosphere for songs of courtship and love. The work bee, in one of the villagers' homes, is well-attended by the young people, and—being adequately chaperoned—has always been the accepted meeting place. Here they may talk seriously, joke, tease, spend a pleasant evening becoming better acquainted without being subject to gossip or criticism.

Most of the social patterns which are sanctioned by the community have been preserved in Bulgarian folk music; plainly visible morals point out the rewards of virtue, the consequences of deviation, the extent of filial obligations, and so on.

Ianka, an only daughter of a widow, is married to the son of a good family wherein, however, a proverbially difficult mother-in-law makes her life unbearable. In desperation, she prays to God to send the plague to take her mother-in-law. When the plague comes, it takes Ianka instead, "Ianka, mother's only daughter."¹³

Raiko's mother urges him to stay home, as there are no *sedénki* that evening be-

cause the next day is St. Procopius' Day. Raiko disobeys his mother, and goes out looking for a party. There is none; only Pena Popova is receiving guests. He calls on her. The following day they are found dead where they sat in the parlor.

Example 1. Непочитане празникъ (Not Respecting a Holy Day.)¹⁴ Sung by Tzana Marinova, 40, of Krushovitza, Plevan; March, 1928. Notated by P. E. Stefanov:

M.M. ♩ = 280

Ве-че-рай, Рай-ко, па ле- рай,

таз ве- чер се-ден-ки не- ма,

The family has long been the core of the social structure in Bulgaria; therefore, all events connected with it, such as the preparations for engagement parties or weddings, are among the most important in the village. The parents, especially the father, choose a husband for their daughter.¹⁵

Songs that attend the announcement of an engagement are usually optimistic, full of flowers, sunshine, and presents such as golden rings, graceful bracelets, necklaces strung with coins. In some cases, however, the lyrics are tinged with the suggestion that the approved method of arranging matches was not invariably a source of unlimited joy.

Wedding songs are sung at various stages in the celebration: at preparation of the wheat-meal, a traditional dish; at the weaving of the chaplet of flowers for the bride; as they shave the bridegroom or braid the bride's hair; as they veil the bride; as she bids goodbye to her family; as she leaves her home; as the procession arrives in front of the groom's home. There may be as many as forty songs in one wedding cycle.

The general spirit of the wedding is one of well-wishing and optimism. The bride, however, is often sad, for she knows that she is entering a life of serious responsibilities and hard physical work, under the strain of which she will soon grow old.¹⁶ She expects to miss her family, to whom she gives the following advice in one song: "Farewell, family and relatives, / Farewell, my own mother; / Do not forget to water my flowers / With fresh water in the morning, / With tears at noon." That her parting thought should be of her flowers is not at all surprising, since through her entire girlhood these flowers had been her only ornament, her only jewelry.

Rituals and belief in magic, remnants of pagan times, color many of the religious celebrations of the Bulgarian peasant. For him, religion has always been a vital part of life, despite the fact that church services, held in Old Slavic, might have been relatively unintelligible to him.¹⁷ The apocryphal books of the Bible have also had their influence on the peasant's explanation of natural phenomena and his willingness to accept miraculous happenings. Hence, numerous folksongs are a mixture of history, legend, and myth.

Ballads about the sun are perhaps the oldest in Bulgaria's folklore. The sun is referred to as "brave *iunaĭ* 'youngblood'"; he participates in contests with mortals and wishes to marry an earthly maiden, frequently the village belle, who symbolizes Earth

in this context. "Through the wedding motif," writes Tz. Minkov, "the folk has best expressed its purely agricultural concept of the beneficial power the sun has on the peasant's existence."¹⁸ And since the sun is patterned after the peasant's own image, he has father, mother, sisters. Sometimes Sun and Dawn are synonymous; at others, the Sun is Dawn's brother.¹⁹

God himself appears in a variety of forms, performing miracles, advising or answering prayers, and even taking part in community functions. In Example 2, which comes from western Thrace, God is one of the guests at the wedding of his godchild—Господъ кумъ (God, the Godfather).²⁰ Sung in Ludzakioi, Burgas, by Stoian Dimitrov, 28, and Kostadin Kiriakov, 30, both of Kavaklia, Lozengrad; April, 1927:

М.М. $\text{♩} = 60$

Да-не ле, зго-дил се е, Да-не ле, Да-ню ю-нак, Да-не ле

дай Бой- да- не, Да-не ле мой ку-ла-де ле ле

Дане ле, згодил се е, Дане ле, Даню	<i>Dane le, Danio iunak</i> got engaged,
юнак,	<i>Dane le, brave iunak</i> Danio
Дане ле дай Бойдане, Дане ле мой	Sent carriages after the engagement
куладе ле,	Over nine villages, into the tenth
Що се й згодил, калески пуснал	Where his godfather lived.
Нис девет села, я у десето,	All gathered and set forth
Я у десето кум му беше.	And soon reached the white Danube,
Субрали се, тръгнаха са,	Whose swift stream carried rocks
Опрели са до бел Дунав.	And prevented the crossing,
Дунаф тече, камък влече,	The crossing of the wedding party.
Гечит не дава да си премине,	
Да си премине тежка свадба.	

Самси Господ кум му беше,
 Разигра си сив зелен кон,
 Та прекъса тих бел Дунав,
 Те премина тешка свадба.
 Вървели са, стигнали са,
 Стигнали са момин двори.

God himself was the godfather.
 He made his horse prance so
 The white Danube calmed, waters parted
 So that the wedding party could cross.
 They went till they reached
 The home of the bride.

Other songs tell of the baptism of Christ. In one of these both St. Elijah and St. George feel unworthy of the task. St. John then "reaches into his right pocket, takes out the keys with which he opens the Heaven and the Earth, takes out some golden fabric, makes a cradle which he ties between two basil branches, rocks the baby to and fro, and sings: 'Up till now both Heaven and Earth / Were in the hands of Saint John. / From now on, may all be blessed, / For it shall belong to Holy Christ.'"²¹

On another occasion, God calms the ocean. Several songs have been recorded which give the peasant version of the birth of Christ. According to one of these, the earth

shakes and the mountains tremble; but the cause was "neither fire destroying the forest, nor *lamiás* roaming the forest, but the Mother of God giving birth to Christ the Child."²²

We also find God building himself a palace, a monastery; we see him turned into a dove or a shepherd, or into a craftsman of the trade of the man in whose house the song is sung.

Bulgaria's calendar makes provision for many saints,²³ and there are songs which relate the exploits of a large number of them. Thus we find that St. Elijah intervenes for mankind and asks God to stop a hurricane; St. Peter refuses his father and mother admission to Paradise; St. George prays to St. Elijah for dew, or frees slaves; St. Paul marries a young girl.²⁴ A most amusing song informs us of a saints' investigating committee whose function it was to place where it belonged the responsibility for setting fire to the land of the Vlachs; St. Elijah was found guilty and was thrown into the Black Sea. "There was no rain for three long years," the song concludes.

Calendric songs abound in Bulgaria; they are sung at Christmas (see Ex. 2), Easter, on saints' days, for the Day of the Trinity, the Day of the Forty Martyrs, the Day of Annunciation. They may be light in nature or report a tragedy; they may deal with magic or a myth, or they may teach a moral. Frequently the motif is seasonal. At other times the text is totally unrelated to the occasion. One can only explain such songs appearing in seasonal cycles by the suggestion that they may be survivals from an earlier tradition related to the seasons at which they are later sung, or the texts have been so altered as to lose any apparent connection, or a new text has been adapted to a traditional melody which still retains its seasonal implication for the folk.

Of those songs whose social role is obvious, the calendric are perhaps the easiest of all to pin down. Their functions are manifold: (1) to record in simple terms the various seasons of the year and their accompanying holidays or customary activities; (2) to validate and perpetuate established religious holidays and customs; (3) to enhance seasonal celebrations described in (1) and (2); (4) to educate.

In addition to stating at length his belief in the supernatural and paying proper respect to the saint's days mentioned, the peasant expresses a very personal interest in Heaven. No disrespect is intended; on the contrary, the highly personal tone of the songs dealing with religious subjects indicates how deeply the peasant feels his religion. Heaven is a place where purity, honesty, and virtue are rewarded. It differs from Heaven as the church describes it; the folk singer uses prime sources—he has his central characters talk to people from the other world, who describe it as an attractive, but at the same time an exclusive place. These conversations with friends in Heaven are narrated with no particular detail as to time and setting. At the *hóró* her friends ask Gana why she is late, and she replies simply:

No, I have not been ill,
Nor have I been caring for a sick person:
I went outdoors last night,
Outdoors to feed my dogs,

When a shadow seemed to appear,
But it was not at all a shadow,
It was my sweetheart, Stoian.

Stoian then describes to young Gana how beautiful it is in "the other world," and asks her to join him there. He also informs her that it is beautiful in Heaven because it is the place where girls go who have been engaged but die before they are married; for

young children;²⁵ for widows who do not remarry. In the outskirts of Heaven, according to Stoian's account,²⁶ are places reserved for married women who remain childless.

In central Bulgaria numerous variants revolve around persons who have amassed wealth by means deemed unethical by the people, or around those who have abused their authority. Both types are poor risks as far as admission to Heaven is concerned, according to the folk singer. There are instances where such persons cannot enter, even though they are members of St. Peter's family; namely, his father, who had been a mayor, and his brother, a landowner.²⁷

The mother of St. John fared no better, judging by a song from Thrace. She cut the cloth too short when she made clothes for others, and her son didn't see how he could possibly allow her to enter Heaven. He does admit his sister, who was generous and always returned more flour than she borrowed. But generosity is not the only criterion, because in the same song we find St. John showing his sister around Heaven: "they see some persons in flame up to their knees, or up to their waists, others whose tongues were being pulled by snakes." Their crimes were, respectively, that they had not observed fast days, had not taken care of their parents, and had robbed the poor to give to the rich.²⁸

It is only natural that the folklore of a peasant society would picture a comfortable Heaven for the poor. There they usually drink and eat festive meals, while the rich, who have only money, "give their gold and silver so that the poor would give them food and drink."²⁹

In the specific examples given here, and in a number of others, the Bulgarian folk singer assures the people that death is not the end, and that after death they will continue to have experiences not much different from those they have on earth; but, in the next world, all will be very pleasant if one has conformed to the social, ethical, and religious concepts accepted by society. The peasant's certainty of immortality may be further deduced from accounts similar to the following: Marika Zeinovichina wishes to be buried in a grave with three windows, "one facing the altar so that I can enjoy the weddings, another toward the steps of the church so that I may watch baptisms, and the third facing the village fountain so that I can watch my girl friends as they meet their sweethearts." In another song, Dana wishes to have four doors: "the sun will shine through the first, the breeze will blow through the second, my mother will enter through the third, while through the fourth my girl friends can enter and visit."³⁰

In some parts of Macedonia each family has a spiritual *stopán*,³¹ usually an ancestor who has been dead for some time. He controls the welfare of the family, and the health and prosperity of both family and livestock depend on how well the family pleases him. There are songs that depict displeased *stopáni* who revenge themselves.³²

Like most primitive folk, the Bulgarian has superstitions, and these are naturally kept alive and transmitted in song. Curiously enough, one of the most famous of all Bulgarian ballads—*Manoil, the Master Builder*, which tells of the immured young wife—is to be found in the folklore of many other countries. It occurs in Serbia (*Zidanje Skadra*), in Albania (*Rozafati*),³³ and is related to similar tales connected with London Bridge,³⁴ the Arta Bridge in Greece, the Caley Bridge in France, and with bridges in Roumania, Germany, and other countries.³⁵

Songs about nymphs, fairies, dragons, and winged serpents (*samodivi, samovili*,

zméiove, *lamiás*) are also numerous. Nymphs are always young, have long blond hair, and a magic or bewitching gaze. In folk poetry they are symbolic of feminine beauty and passionate love.

The *zméi* usually wishes to marry a human being and take her to his palace in the underworld. In many songs he abducts his bride. The monotonous life in the open spaces is enlivened by the *zméitza* (female), who falls in love with a shepherd. A song (Example 3) from north-central Bulgaria dramatizes the rivalry between a *zméi* and a peacock over pretty Dona: *Змей и паунъ* (The Zmei and the Peacock).³⁶ Sung by Neda Dinova, 50, and Juna Minkova, 50, of Mikre, Lovech:



A battle takes place by the village well. A *zméi* and a peacock are both in love with Dona. The *zméi* suggests that they should not fight, but instead come to the village early the following morning; the peacock will throw gold coins in the well, the *zméi* will throw beautiful feathers. If Dona wishes to marry the peacock she will take the coins; if she chooses the feathers, then she will marry the *zméi*.

In the majority of folksongs these creatures are quite agreeable, and whenever conflicts arise with human beings, the latter are always victorious. The exception is the *lamiá*, who in both song and tale is patterned after similar monsters in Greek mythology.

It was a *samovila* who was responsible for the superhuman qualities of *iunák*³⁷ *Krali Marko*,³⁸ whose exploits are a mixture of myth and history. As a child he was physically the weakest among his companions. While he was tending his father's horses one day, he found a little girl crying and comforted her. This little girl was the daughter of a *samovila*, who rewarded Marko by allowing him to suck her milk. In this manner, Marko became the strongest man alive, and the little girl—Giorga *samodiva*—helped him with advice.³⁹ There is an extensive cycle covering Marko's escapades, comprising some two hundred and fifty songs of approximately 40,000 verses.⁴⁰ In western Macedonia it is believed that Krali Marko is not dead, but still lives in a deep cave somewhere in the mountains between the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa, where he awaits the day when he can appear again in the world and deliver his people from slavery.⁴¹

Quite another type of hero is found in the *heiduk*⁴² song, which is among the best records of the struggle for national survival that the Bulgarian possesses. The *heiduk* makes his appearance with the Turkish occupation of Bulgaria, and for centuries provided "the only political law" of an indigenous nature.⁴³ A detailed discussion of the *heiduk* songs is not possible at this time; it must merely be mentioned that they afford a rich background for the understanding of the spirit that kept alive for five hundred

years the spark of national feeling under foreign occupation. The psychological importance of these songs cannot therefore be overestimated, and might well be a fit subject for intensive investigation.

The unconscious pictures that people create of themselves are more authentic and more accurate than any others we can secure, and the Bulgarian peasant has been most successful in giving us a record of his views on matters which he himself considers important.

NOTES

¹ George L. Gomme, *Folklore as an Historical Science* (London, 1908).

² A. H. Krappe, *The Science of Folklore* (London, 1930), p. xv. He speaks of the scope of folklore as the task of reconstructing "the spiritual history of man . . . as represented by the more or less inarticulate voices of the 'folk.'"

³ William R. Bascom, "Folklore and Anthropology," *JAF*, LXVI (1953), 284.

⁴ Maria Leach, ed. *The Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (New York, 1949-50), I, 398. The distinction between words which are spoken, chanted, or sung is—in the folk tradition of Bulgaria with which I am familiar—in the final analysis one of degree.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 398-403.

⁶ *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, VII (1955), 23. The definition, formulated after several years of study and discussion, reads as follows: "Folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The factors that shape the tradition are: (i) continuity which links the past with the present; (ii) variation which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; (iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives.

"The term can be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by popular and art music and it can likewise be applied to music which has originated with an individual composer and has subsequently been absorbed into the unwritten living tradition of a community.

"The term does not cover composed popular music that has been taken over ready-made by a community and remains unchanged, for it is the re-fashioning and re-creation of the music by the community that gives it its folk character."

⁷ M. Arnaudov, *Ocherki po Bulgarska Folklore* (Sofia, 1934), pp. 246-247, has this to say on the subject: ". . . All human passions and vices, all discomforts and worry, pass before our eyes—nothing escapes the attention of the anonymous singers. The folksongs lead us over the forests and the plains of Bulgaria, tell us of merchants, shepherds and harvesters, report sickness, epidemics, catastrophes, robberies and murders; describe weddings, funerals, baptisms and holiday customs; take us into the agricultural life of the village, with its activities indoors and in the fields, with threshing, weaving, spinning and so on. In a word—here we have real poetic annals, from which we can study the social life of an epoch in the development of our nation. . . ." (Translations from Bulgarian to English are in every case my own.)

⁸ Krappe (above, n. 2), pp. 161 ff.

⁹ Dimitur Osinin, *Dushata na bulgarina* (Sofia, 1943), pp. 272-273.

¹⁰ Vasil Stoin, *Narodni pesni ot Timok do Vita* (Sofia, 1928), p. 232, No. 998.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251, No. 1072.

¹² At the *sedénka* each brings her own project and works on it; at the *tlaká* all guests contribute their services to the host, the task usually being corn-husking.

¹³ Stoin, p. 352, No. 1444. Here it is Ianka's mother who takes on the responsibility, usually assigned to the father, of arranging a suitable marriage for her daughter.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359, No. 1466. Perhaps the choice of the girl's name is not coincidental, since to the peasant "Popova" would indicate that Pena is a member of the family of the village priest.

¹⁵ Folksong records many instances in which the daughter ran away in what would be announced as a "kidnapping." The songs customarily absolve the girl of all blame: she is forced

"against her will on a horse that rides away in the dark" or "is tricked into going away" with an unsuitable young man as the unhappy mother watches.

¹⁶ Osinin (above, n. 9), pp. 11 ff.

¹⁷ Approximately 85% of the seven million Bulgarians today belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Boris I introduced Christianity in 865 AD, the country's national history having begun in 679 AD. Some 13% of the population are still Moslems.

¹⁸ Tz. Minkov, *Narodni Baladi* (Sofia, 1937), p. 7.

¹⁹ The moon and the stars do not seem to have a clearly defined status in Bulgarian folklore. They are always friendly, however, and converse freely with human beings.

²⁰ Vasil Stoin, *Bulgarški narodni pesni ot Iztochna i Zapadna Trakia* (Sofia, 1939), p. 27, No. 61. This is a carol sung at Christmastime for newly-engaged couples. *Dane* is the appellative form of Danio; *le* is meaningless.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22, No. 47.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 25, No. 55.

²³ Each day of the year is dedicated to a different saint. Persons who bear the name of the saint celebrate their "name day" as more important than their birthdays.

²⁴ Stoin (above, n. 20), p. 45, No. 121. When the wedding party headed by St. John reaches the Jordan, it becomes necessary for St. John (the groom's godfather, cf. Ex. 2) to make the waters part for the crossing of the group.

²⁵ In some songs it is specified that children should be "three days old"; in others, "before they are baptized."

²⁶ Stoin, *Narodni pesni ot Sredna Severna Bulgaria* (Sofia, 1931), p. 46, No. 124. Stoian also tells his former sweetheart that "it is sinful to be a married woman and to die childless."

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49, No. 131. This incident closes with a couple in love, who were found eligible and admitted.

²⁸ Stoin, *Bulgarški narodni pesni ot Iztochna i Zapadna Trakia*, pp. 29-30, No. 67. Those who have done good deeds on earth spend their time feasting instead.

²⁹ Stoin, *Narodni pesni ot Sredna Severna Bulgaria*, p. 48, No. 128. A Bulgarian proverb closely parallels this poem: "A hungry chicken dreams of millet."

³⁰ Osinin (above, no. 9), p. 39.

³¹ Proprietor; in this case, one who protects the family and is even believed to control its destiny.

³² Arnaudov (above, n. 7), p. 567. The example given is from Nevrokop, near the Greek border.

³³ Stavro Skendi, *Albanian and South Slavic Oral Epic Poetry* (Philadelphia, 1954), pp. 50 ff.

³⁴ Gomme (above, n. 1), pp. 26 ff.

³⁵ Arnaudov, p. 572.

³⁶ Stoin, *Narodni pesni ot Sredna Severna Bulgaria*, p. 7, No. 16.

³⁷ Literally, a strong, brave man; in Bulgarian folk poetry it means a hero.

³⁸ Claimed by all Balkan Slavs, Marko is said to have been born in Prilep, Macedonia, c. 1335, and died in 1394. Because of his many heroic deeds in the dark days of foreign subjugation, Marko has emerged as a symbol of Slavic power and love for freedom.

³⁹ Osinin, *Zaplačala e gorata* (Sofia, 1947), p. 6.

⁴⁰ Enio Nicolov, *Krali Marko* (Sofia, 1938), p. 5.

⁴¹ Arnaudov, p. 11. Note similarity to legends about Barbarossa, King Wenzel, Charlemagne, Kralj Matjaz, and so on.

⁴² The Turkish meaning for the identical word is bandit; in Bulgarian it has a meaning related to that of the guerrilla warrior of modern times.

⁴³ The earliest written record of a *voyvoda* (a leader of the *heiduks*) is in 1454.

AVDO MEĐEDOVIĆ, GUSLAR

BY ALBERT BATES LORD

"Demodocus, I praise you beyond all mortal men, whether your teacher was the muse, the child of Zeus, or was Apollo."

Homer, *Odyssey*, VIII, 487-488

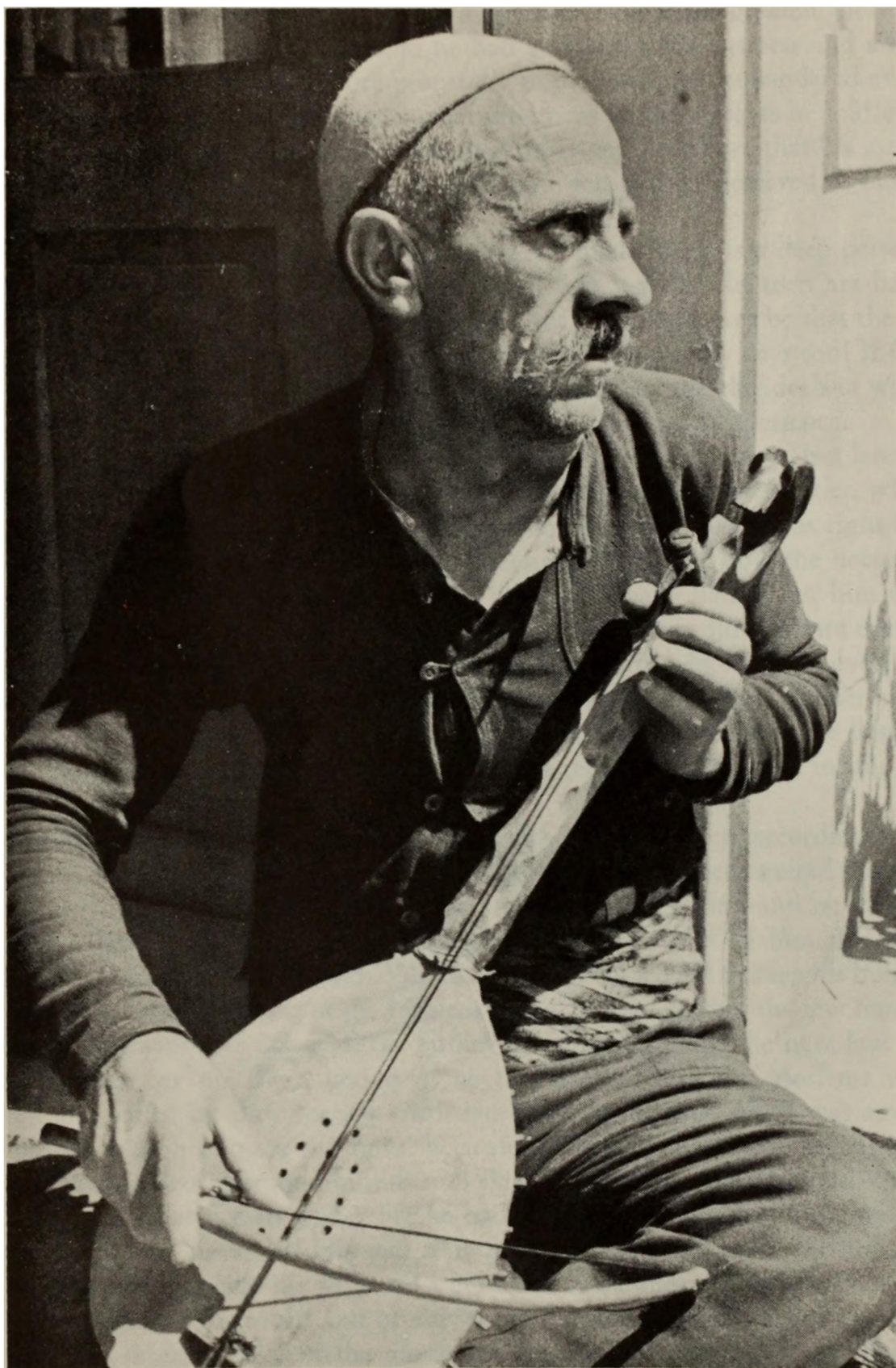
AVDO Međedović of the village of Obrov, a half hour's walk from Bijelo Polje in eastern Montenegro, died sometime during 1955 at the approximate age of eighty-five. It may well be that he was the last of the truly great epic singers of the Balkan Slavic tradition of oral narrative song. The texts of those of his songs which were recorded for the enlightenment of the scholarly world remain, alas, still unpublished.¹ His real fame is still a thing of the future. Yet his passing must not go unmarked by the scholars who have benefited much already by his remarkable talents.

Avdo was Moslem, as is clear from his given name, Abdullah; but by blood he was Slavic. In centuries past his family had been Orthodox and had come from central Montenegro; they were related to the Rovčani and came from Nikšić.² Avdo knew neither when nor why they had become Moslemized. During the first half of his life Avdo was a Turkish subject; for up to the First World War Bijelo Polje belonged to the Sandžak of Novi Pazar in the Turkish Empire. Here he was born and here he lived and died. His father and grandfather were butchers in the town, and in his mid 'teens Avdo began to learn their trade. After some two years of apprenticeship he went into the army as "a still beardless youth," and when he returned seven years later his father did not recognize him.

In the army he spent three years in Kriva Palanka on the Bulgarian border. For another year he fought with Šemsi Pasha in Albania, and then after six months in Kumanovo near Skopje in Macedonia he was sent to a school for non-commissioned officers in Salonica, where, according to his own account, he "rotted for a year and emerged a sergeant." He then passed another year in Kriva Palanka drilling others in the tactics he had learned under "Alamani" officers in Salonica, after which he was on guard duty for six months at a post on the Bulgarian frontier "under the skies, high in the mountains." When he returned to headquarters his discharge came.

It is characteristic of Avdo that the only time that he was disciplined in the army was when he struck an "Anatolian" with the butt of his rifle for cursing the faith (*din*). Ordinarily a peaceful man, he was stirred deeply by the religious laxity of the Anatolian Turks, whom he called "unbelievers." He was himself devout and conservative, a person of lofty principles, yet unostentatious. All this is reflected in his poems.

Although Avdo learned to speak and understand Turkish in the army, he was never able to read or write any language. In those days there were only Turkish language schools, and his father had never sent him to them. During his lifetime he saw the growth of literacy in younger generations and shared both the feeling of inferiority and the pride of accomplishment of those illiterates who had led successful lives. It was "stupid" he thought, in retrospect, that he had never learned to read and write;



Avdo Međedović, Guslar

"... for at the hands of all on earth bards meet respect and honor, because the muse has taught them song and loves the race of bards." Homer, *Odyssey*, VIII, 479-481

and yet, in spite of that, he had been a good tradesman because he was honest. He had the respect and confidence of his fellow merchants. One of the greatest shocks of his life had come when the son to whom he had given over his business and all his capital, that Avdo himself might retire peacefully to the farm, had squandered everything in riotous living. There was bitter disillusionment in his voice as he told of it. He had been brought up to honor and obey his father and to believe that "as a man sows, so shall he reap." Having been a good son, he felt that he deserved to have a good son.

In Avdo's song, "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail," there is a deep personal ring in the words of young Mehmed when asked whether the old men are better than the young. "Opinions are divided," he said, "but mine shall ever be that the old men are better than the young." His questioner replied: "Bravo, my dear son! If God grants, you will be an honor to us." Avdo was singing of a past age, the ideals of which were his own, tried and not found wanting in the acid of his own experience.

After serving in the army Avdo returned to his trade with his father, but later he was called up again as a border guard, this time on the Montenegrin frontier, where he stayed for a year and a half. He was wounded in the Balkan wars; his right arm was broken by a bullet. With some epic exaggeration he told of how the doctor in Bijelo Polje could not stop the blood for four days and finally had to put him on a horse and send him with two soldiers to Senica. Here the doctor did not dare even to inspect his wound but sent him on to Novi Pazar. Four doctors looked him over, saw the danger, and sent him to Mitrovica, where twelve doctors consulted together about his case and then sent him post haste by train to Salonica. There he lay in the hospital forty-five days. One bullet was extracted, but another remained in his arm for the rest of his life.

Two years after returning from the army he was married, when, according to his reckoning, he was twenty-nine years old. It was at this time that he acquired the little farm in Obrov. His friends had praised a girl in that village to him, and he married her, as the custom was, without ever setting eyes on her or she on him. He lived through the terror of the First World War and somehow managed to keep his butcher shop. His descriptions of the lot of the Moslem in Bijelo Polje during the few months immediately following the downfall of Turkey are graphic. Until the new law and government were set up, for a period of about three months, the Moslems were plundered and killed by their former Christian subjects, the *raja*. Avdo was among those who survived; his family had never been rich, they had never been "aghas."

He watched the world around him torn to shreds once more by the Second World War. During these later years of his life he had the satisfaction which as father and patriarch he felt was his right. His two sons stayed by him and cared for him. He had daughters-in-law to help his wife and a grandson to dandle on his knee. He was a quiet family man in a disturbed and brutal world. The high moral tone of his songs is genuine. His pride in tales of the glories of the Turkish Empire in the days of Sulejman, when it was at its height and when "Bosnia was its lock and its golden key," was poignantly sincere without ever being militant or chauvinistic. That empire was dead, and Avdo knew it, because he had been there to hear its death rattle. But it had once been great in spite of the corruption of the imperial nobility surrounding the sultan. To Avdo its greatness was in the moral fiber and loyal dedication of the Bosnian

heroes of the past even more than in the strength of their arms. These characteristics of Avdo's poems, as well as a truly amazing sensitivity for the feelings of other human beings, spring from within the singer himself. He was not "preserving the traditional"; Avdo believed with conviction in the tradition which he exemplified.

Milman Parry of Harvard University's Department of Classics collected epic songs from Avdo during the months of July and August, 1935. Avdo had a repertory of fifty-eight epics; Parry recorded nine of these on phonograph discs and Nikola Vujnović, Parry's assistant, wrote down four others from Avdo's dictation. They are:

RECORDED

- "The Death of Mustajbey of the Lika" (Parry Text No. 6807, Records Nos. 5146-5180, 28 June 1935, 2,436 lines)
- "Hrnjica Mujo Avenges the Death of Mustajbey of the Lika" (Text No. 6810, Rec. Nos. 5181-5278, 29-30 June 1935, 6,290 lines)
- "The Wedding of Vlahinjić Alija" (Text No. 12,375, Rec. Nos. 5459-5552, 14-15 July 1935, 6,042 lines; there is also a dictated version of this song from Avdo, Text No. 6841, 16, 24, 25 July 1935, 5,883 lines)
- "The Heroism of Đerđelez Alija" (Text No. 12,379, Rec. Nos. 5595-5635, 15-16 July 1935, 2,624 lines)
- "Osmanbey Delibegović and Pavičević Luka" (Texts Nos. 12,389 and 12,441, Rec. Nos. 5712-5817, 6471-6561, 17-20 July, 1-3 August 1935, 13,331 lines)
- "Sultan Selim Captures Kandija" (Text No. 12,447, Rec. Nos. 6677-6763, 4, 5, 8 August 1935, 5,919 lines)
- "The Illness of Emperor Dušan in Prizren" (Text No. 12,463, Rec. Nos. 6848-6857, 8 August 1935, 645 lines)
- "The Captivity of Kara Omeragha" (Text No. 12,465, Rec. Nos. 6888-6906, 9 August 1935, 1,302 lines)
- "Bećiragić Meho" (Text No. 12,471, Rec. Nos. 7015-7108, 10-11 August 1935, 6,313 lines)

DICTATED

- "The Arrival of the Vizier in Travnik" (Text No. 6802, 29-30 June, 4-5 July 1935, 7,621 lines)
- "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail" (Text No. 6840, 5-12 July 1935, 12,323 lines)
- "Gavran Harambaša and Sirdar Mujo" (Text No. 12,427, 26 July 1935, 4,088 lines)
- "The Captivity of Tale of Orašac in Ozim" (Text No. 12,428, 30 July 1935, 3,738 lines, unfinished)

The mere bulk of these epic songs is astonishing: 637 record sides, or 319 twelve-inch phonograph discs recorded on both sides; 44,902 lines sung on discs, and 33,653 lines written from dictation. His longest song on records contains 13,331 lines and fills 199 record sides, or 100 twelve-inch discs recorded on both sides. If one reckons five minutes of singing on one side of a record, then this song represents over 16 hours of singing time. The total singing time for all the recorded material listed above is approximately 53 hours.

To these songs must be added the conversations with Avdo which were recorded on discs. These conversations cover 180 twelve-inch records recorded on both sides. In other words, the total recorded songs and conversations from this single singer fill 499 discs on both sides, or nearly one-seventh of the 3,584 twelve-inch records in the entire

Parry Collection. The conversations contain the story of his life, a lengthy discussion of the singers from whom he learned his songs, and a running commentary from questions prepared beforehand by Parry to two of his texts, "The Arrival of the Vizier in Travnik" and "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail."

It was my privilege to return to Biželo Polje in 1950 and 1951, where I had been with Parry as a student in 1935, and to find Ardo still ready, in spite of poor health, to sing and recite epic songs. At that time I recorded on wire the following texts, partly sung, partly recited:

"Osmanbey Delibegović and Parčević Luka" (Lord Text No. 33, 23, 24, 26 May 1950, 6,119 lines)

"The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail" (Text No. 35, 23 May 1950, 8,488 lines)

"Bećiragić Meho" (Text No. 202, 16 August 1951, 3,561 lines)

These additional 18,168 lines bring the total lines of epic from Ardo Mededović to 96,723.

These statistics alone are an indication of the value which Milman Parry placed on Ardo as a singer and tell at a glance one of the reasons for this high regard. Ardo could sing songs of about the length of Homer's *Odyssey*. An illiterate butcher in a small town of the central Balkans was equalling Homer's feat, at least in regard to length of song. Parry had actually seen and heard two long epics produced in a tradition of oral epic.

In the case of two of Ardo's songs, "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail" and "Bećiragić Meho," we had the exact original from which Ardo had learned them and we knew the circumstances under which he acquired them. A friend of his had read "The Wedding of Meho" to him five or six times from a published version. It had been written down in 1885 by F. S. Krauss from an eighty-five year old singer in Rotimlje, Hercegovina, named Ahmed Isakov Šemić, and had been published in Dubrovnik in 1886. It was later reprinted, with minor changes in dialect, in cheap paper editions in Sarajevo, without notes and introduction. In this form it was read to Ardo. Krauss' text has 2,160 lines; Ardo's in 1935 had 12,323 lines and in 1950, 8,488 lines.

Ardo's singing of this or any other song was always longer than anyone else's performance, because he belonged in a tradition of singers who habitually "ornamented" their songs by richness of description, and because he had himself always had a fondness for this "ornamentation." His technique, and that of his fellows, was expansion from within by the addition of detail and fullness of narrative. Catalogues are extended and also amplified by description of men and horses; journeys are described in detail; assemblies abound in speeches.

Ardo has culled his "ornaments," as he himself called them, from all the singers whom he heard. But he did not stop there. He admitted that he thought up some of them himself; and this is true. He told me once that he "saw in his mind every piece of trapping which he put on a horse." He visualized the scene or the action, and from that mental image he formed a verbal reflection in his song. Ardo's songs are living proof that the best of oral epic singers are original poets working within the tradition

in the traditional manner. These texts provide priceless evidence for the theorists in comparative epic studies.

It is impossible here to do more than hint at illustrating this singer's technique of amplification. The opening scene of "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail" is an assembly of the lords of the Turkish border in the city of Kanidža. In Krauss' published version this assembly occupies 141 lines; Avdo's text has 1,053 lines. The essence of the assembly is that all the lords are merry except young Meho. The head of the assembly asks him why he is sad, and he replies that he alone of all of them has nothing of which to boast. He has been pampered by his father and uncle and not allowed to engage in raids across the border. He will desert to the enemy, he declares. The lords then decide that they will send him to Budapest, there to be invested by the vizier with the position of authority which his uncle has held up to this moment. The uncle is old and agrees that the time has come to give over his authority to his nephew. The lords prepare a petition to the vizier, deliver it to Meho, and the assembly is dissolved. All this is in the songbook version.

Avdo gains length by adding much description such as the following:

As you cast your eyes about the gathering to see which hero is the best, one stands out above them all, even Mehmed, the young son of Smailagha. What a countenance has this falcon! He is a youth of not yet twenty years, and one would say and swear by Allah and the Rosary that the radiance from his two cheeks is like sunshine and that from his brow like unto the light of the moon. The black queue which covered his white neck was like a raven that had perched there. He was the only child his mother had borne; she had cared lovingly for his queue and bound his locks over his forehead, and her son's thick dark locks curled around his fez. His mother had strung them with pearls, which completely covered the strands. His eyes were black as a falcon's, his teeth fine as a demon's. His forehead was like a good-luck charm, his eyebrows thick as leeches. His eyelids were so long that they covered his two cheeks even as swallows' wings. Beard had he none, nor yet mustache. One would say that he was a fair mountain spirit. The boy's raiment was of Venetian stuff; his blouse of choice silk embroidered with gold. There was, indeed, more gold than silken fabric. His doublet was neither woven nor forged, but was hand embroidered with pure gold. The seams of his cloak were covered with richly embroidered gold, and golden branches were twined around his right sleeve. The young man's arm was as thick as any other fine hero's slender waist. The youth's breeches were of white Venetian velvet, embroidered with pure gold, with braided snakes on the thighs. The whole glistened like the moon. He wore two Tripolitan sashes about his waist and over them the belt of arms of Venetian gold. In the belt were two small Venetian pistols which fire without flint, all plated with gold. Their sights were of precious stones, and the handles were inlaid with pearl. His Persian sword with hilt of yellow ducats was at his left side in its scabbard inlaid with pearls. Its blade was deadly steel. As the sword lay thrown across the youth's thighs one would say a serpent was sleeping there. A golden breastplate embraced the young hero, two-pieced, reaching to his white neck. Each half of the breastplate contained an even half pound of gold, and on them both was the same inscription. That breastplate had been sent by the sultan to the alajbey, Smail the Pilgrim, and to his true son; for that house had held the alajbeyship for full forty-seven years by charter of Sulejman the Magnificent, by his imperial charter and appointment.

Avdo also adds new action to the assembly, action which indicates that not only is the singer's eye observing the scene but that his mind and sensitivity to heroic feelings

penetrate within the hearts of the men depicted on this animated tapestry. For example, the head of the assembly, Hasan Pasha Tiro, notices that the young man is sad, and the pasha is disturbed:

He could not bear to see the young man's sadness, nor could he ask the lad before all the beys to speak out the cause of his sorrow. So Hasan Pasha leaped to his feet and called Cifrić Hasan: "Come here with me a moment, Hasanagha, that I may have a word with you!" Hasanagha went to Hasan Pasha and sat beside him. Then Hasan Pasha whispered to Hasanagha: "Hasanagha, golden plume, my heart breaks within my breast to see your brother's son, Mehmedagha, son of Smail the Pilgrim. All the rest are merry. He alone is sad. You go and sit beside him. Do not question him immediately, lest he notice that I called you to me for that purpose and be angry at me."

Then Hasan obeyed the pasha and took his seat beside Meho, the son of Smail the Pilgrim. The cursed cups flew around, and the agha's drank; for they had no cares, and no one noticed that that hero was unhappy. Since he has all he wants, why should the young man be sad?

A half hour passed. Then Cifrić Hasan leaped to his feet: "O pasha, and all you beys, have patience a moment!" They all stopped and looked at the agha. Cifrić Hasan knelt and then asked his brother's son Mehmed: "My Mehmed, honor of our house! Why do you sit there so sad in the company of the imperial Hasan Pasha Tiro and the fifty warriors of the Sultan?"

This little play between the pasha and Meho's uncle is, I believe, original with Avdo; I have found it nowhere else. And it is a stroke of real genius. Only a poet who lived what he was telling would have thought of it. Avdo was the kind of person who would have done just what the pasha did. Such additions do much more, of course, than add length to the song; they make the characters in the story, in this case a usually stiff and stereotyped chief of the assembly, feeling, pulsating human beings. Not that Avdo was "developing character portrayal." He was simply telling what he himself felt. Such touches are Homeric.

Another technique which Avdo uses very effectively in gaining length, breadth, and depth of song is the time-honored "flashback." We have seen something of it in the comment on the breastplate of Meho that it had been sent by the sultan to Smail and to his son. Avdo develops this theme later in the long speech of Meho's uncle to the youth after the boy has said that he will run away to the enemy.

"When you were born, your head rested on a pillowed couch, your brow fell upon gold, and your locks were strewn with pearls. My dear son, when you were born from the pearly lap of your mother, in every city up and down the Border, in Bosnia, Hercegovina, and Hungary, cannon roared and beys and aghas held festive gatherings in honor of your father Smail and me, your uncle. . . . They sent word to the sultan, and the sultan sent a firman to your father and to me, your uncle: 'I congratulate you both on the birth of your son! May his life be long and honorable, and may the alajbeyship fall to him as it did to his father and to his uncle Hasan!' Nor, my son, did we pick a name for you at random, but we gave you the name of imperial Mehdiya, Mehdiya, the imperial pontiff. That you might live longer, we brought in three women besides your mother to nurse you, in order that you might receive more nourishment, grow more in a short time and attain greater strength. We could scarcely wait for you to grow up, so four nurses gave you suck, first your mother and then the other three.

"Day followed day, and after four years had passed, my son, you had grown well, in

God's faith, and were as large as any other lad of eight years. Then we began your schooling and brought the *imam* to your feet. We could not bear to send you away from home to school, and the *imam* taught you at our own house. You studied until you were eight years old, my son, and if you had studied yet another year, you would have been a *hafiz*. Then we took you from school.

"When you were twelve, another firman came from Stambol asking me and your father, Smailagha: 'Smailagha, how is the boy? Will he be like his father and his uncle Hasan?' And we boasted about you to the sultan: 'O sovereign, most humble greetings! It is likely that the boy will be good; he will not fall much short of us.'

"When your thirteenth year dawned, my son, the imperial chamberlain came from the halls of Sultan Sulejman bringing an Egyptian horse for you, one which had been bought from the Shah of Egypt, with wings of gold. Its mane reached its hoofs. Then a two-year-old, it was like a horse of seven. The trappings were fashioned in Afghanistan especially for the chestnut steed when it grew up. The saddle was decorated with coral, and the upper portion was woven of pure gold. . . .

"It is now nineteen years, my dear son, since that day when you were born, and this is the ninth year since the chestnut steed came to you as a gift. . . . We hid the horse from you and made a special stall for him in the side of the stable. There is no other horse with him. Two servants are in the stable and four torches burn the whole night through at your chestnut horse's side; they water him within the stable. They groom him four times every twenty-four hours; not as any other horse is groomed, but with a scarf of silk. You should see how well-nourished the horse is, even though he has seen neither sun nor moon, my dear son, for nine years. . . .

"Among the clothes which have come for you is a breastplate covered with pearls; its silk is from Damascus. . . . And a Persian sword was sent, which had been forged especially for you, my son, of fiery Persian steel tempered in angry poison, which cuts fierce armor. Its scabbard is decorated with pearls and its hilt with diamonds. When it was finished, they sent the sword to Mecca by an Arab messenger, who delivered it to the sheikh of the Kaaba. The sheikh inscribed it with a passage from the Sacred Book and then blessed it. No ill can befall him who wields it. The common ranks will flee in terror before him. In Mecca, with the imperial blessing, they named the sword 'The Persian Pilgrim,' because it was made for you in Persia and taken on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Woe to him who stands in its way! On its hilt are three imperial seals and the two seals of the sheikh of Mecca, my son.

"Upon the fur cap which was sent to you, my son, there are twelve plumes. Neither your father nor I has such a cap; how then would any other, except you to whom the sultan presented it! . . .

"Were you to gather all these treasures together, they would be worth a good Bosnian city!"

I have quoted at some length in order to emphasize the various attributes which Avdo has given his hero, young Mehmed. They are not bestowed upon him in any other version of this song which I have found; they seem to me Avdo's gift to Meho. Not, of course, that Avdo invented the precocious childhood, the magic horse, the wonder-working sword, and the protective breastplate and cap. These are perhaps in their essences inheritances from Indo-European tradition directly through the Slavic line, later reinforced by Byzantine traditions. Surely the glitter and elegance is Byzantine. They can be found in other poems, although Avdo, it must be admitted, describes them more fully than I have seen elsewhere.

The wonder of this passage, however, does not rest merely in its ornamentation. It

rests rather in the fact that Avdo has thought fit to add these particular attributes to Mehmed. For these are the qualities and possessions of the magic hero who slays dragons and saves maidens, who rights wrongs and destroys evil. Mehmed is, indeed, that kind of hero. He kills the treacherous vizier and the vizier's henchmen; he saves a maiden; he restores law and order in Budapest, and brings exiles back from Persia. Avdo unwittingly, or by an almost miraculous instinct, has chosen the *proper* attributes for the *proper* hero. He has related Meho to *Digenis Akritas*³ (and this poem of Smailagić Meho should be carefully studied in its relationship to the medieval Greek epic) and to the basic epic theme of the divine, or divinely inspired, hero who is a savior of mankind. Somehow or other, Avdo Međedović, the butcher from Bijelo Polje, had acquired a deep and unerring sense of the well-springs of epic.

Avdo belonged to a tradition which had been in the hands of fine singers for many generations. Without such a rich tradition behind and around him he could not have had the materials of song. He learned his art from skilled men; first and of most lasting importance from his father. Avdo's father had been deeply influenced by a singer of his generation whose reputation seems to have been prodigious, Ćor Huso Husein of Kolašin. We know something of this singer not only from Avdo, who heard about him from his father, but also from other singers in Bijelo Polje and Novi Pazar who learned songs from Ćor Huso. From the material in the Parry Collection we shall some day be able to reconstruct part of his repertory, at least; and probably also his handling of specific themes. His most distinctive characteristic as a singer was his ability to "ornament" a song. Of this we are told by all who knew him. Avdo was a worthy student of the Ćor Huso school.

With Avdo the song, the story itself and the telling of it, was paramount. He had exceptional powers of endurance, but his voice was not especially good. He was hoarse, and the goiter on the left side of his neck could not have helped. Nor was his playing of the gusle in any way of virtuoso quality. He told Parry that he learned the songs first and then the musical accompaniment. His singing ran ahead of his fingers on the instrument; thoughts and words rushed to his mind for expression, and there were times when he simply ran the bow slowly back and forth over the strings while he poured forth the tale in what seemed to be prose of lightning-like rapidity but was actually verse. He was not a musician, but a poet and singer of tales.

Parry in 1935 made trial of Avdo's ability to learn a song which he had never heard before. Among the singers from whom Parry collected while Avdo was dictating or resting was Mumin Vlahovljak of Plevlje. Parry arranged that Avdo was present and listening while Mumin sang "Bećiragić Meho," a song which Parry had adroitly determined was unknown to Avdo. Mumin was a good singer and his song was a fine one, running to 2,294 lines. When it was over, Parry turned to Avdo and asked him if he could now sing the same song, perhaps even sing it better than Mumin, who accepted the contest good-naturedly and sat by in his turn to listen. Avdo, indeed, addressed himself in his song to his "colleague" (*kolega*) Muminaga. And the pupil's version of the tale reached to 6,313 lines, nearly three times the length of his "original" on the first singing!

Avdo used the same technique of expansion from within in ornamenting "Bećiragić Meho" that he used in "Smailagić Meho." This song also opens with an assembly of the lords of the border. Bećiragić Meho leaves the assembly at line 1,320 in Mumin's

version, at line 3,977 in Avdo's. There are similarities between the gathering at the beginning of "Smailagić Meho" and that which begins "Bećiragić Meho." In the midst of the lords in both instances is a young man who is unhappy. But the head of the assembly in "Bećiragić Meho," Mustajbey of the Lika, unlike Hasan Pasha Tiro is a proud and overbearing man; and Bećiragić Meho himself is at the foot of the assembly, poor, despised. As we should expect, Avdo's telling is distinguished by richness of description and by such similes as, referring to the unhappy Meho, "His heart was wilted like a rose in the hands of a rude bachelor." But when a messenger arrives with a letter for Meho and Meho has to announce his own presence, because Mustajbey is ashamed to acknowledge him, Meho lashes out at the head of the assembly in moral indignation; and Avdo "ornaments" the theme of Meho's reproach far beyond Mumin's telling of it. Avdo has Meho remind Mustajbey that he has riches and power now, but everything comes in time; time builds towers and time destroys them. Meho said that he, too, had once been of a well-to-do family, but time and destiny had deprived him of all. Avdo's earnestness, his philosophizing and moralizing, has a personal note. As we said earlier, Avdo had seen the Turkish Empire fall; and just before our arrival in Bijelo Polje, his own house had been burned to the ground. His ornamentation is not mere prettiness, nor trite sayings, but words of wisdom from personal experience.

Avdo has made two minor changes in the action of the song up to this point which are worth noting as characteristic of his artistry. His sense of the dramatic has caused him to withhold Bećiragić's identity—even though, of course, the audience is perfectly aware from the start who the unidentified young man is—until Meho himself rises to reproach Mustajbey. Even more interesting, however, is the way in which Avdo has prepared us for Mustajbey's attitude. In Mumin's version the messenger arrives, inquires if he is in Udbina, asks to have Mustajbey pointed out to him, does obeisance to the bey and then speaks. Avdo's handling of the arrival of the messenger is somewhat different. The messenger is seen from afar; Mustajbey sends his standard-bearers to meet him; they bring him before the aghas and beys and he asks if he is in Kanidža (Avdo has changed the place). Mustajbey, rather than Halil in Mumin's version, answers, and the messenger, noting that Mustajbey is the most honored man in the assembly, asks his name and rank. Mustajbey replies with his name and a list of all the places over which he rules. The messenger then does obeisance and speaks, beginning with flattery of Mustajbey, praising his fame. This is typical ornamentation on Avdo's part, and yet it emphasizes Mustajbey's vainglory.

These are but samples of Avdo's methods in changing and expanding the songs which he has heard. He does not, one should stress, gain length by adding one song to another. His long songs provide no solace to the theorists who have held that long epics are made of shorter ballads strung together. Avdo's technique is similar to Homer's. It is true that some singers, when pressed to sing a long song, add one song to another and mix and combine songs in various ways. This is, however, a process which good singers look down upon and do not practice.

Avdo in 1935, when he was already sixty years of age, maintained that he had been at the height of his powers when he was in his forties. We have seen a glimpse of the quality of this talented singer in his sixties and can only guess at his excellence twenty years earlier. We should do well not to minimize the extraordinary feat which

he performed when he was in his eighties. For at least ten years he had sung very little. He was weak and ill in 1950 and 1951, and, alas, the circumstances of collecting were far from ideal. I had very little time, and working with a singer like Avdo requires leisure. Yet, even under adverse conditions, he sang and recited two long songs totalling over fourteen thousand lines in about a week's time! When he finished the song of "Osmanbey Delibegović and Pavičević Luka," he apologized that it was shorter; he had cut down some of the description of the army. He was indeed unwell, and we took him to the doctor, who was very kind. Six thousand lines is still a sizeable song. And the eight thousand and more lines of his "Smailagić Meho" in 1950 was a prodigious undertaking which few, if any, younger men could have accomplished.

His description of young Meho was shorter than that quoted above, but the flashback to the birth of Meho, his precocious childhood, and the gifts of the sultan, the horse, helmet, breastplate, and pilgrim sword were not forgotten. They were not in the same place in the song, however. Avdo now put them into the mouth of Meho's father after the boy had returned with his uncle to their home to inform Smail of what had happened. As Smail is about to send Meho to his mother to prepare for the journey to Budapest, Smail tells him about the horse and weapons and clothes which have been kept for him. It is a fitting place for the theme.

Perhaps the most astonishing of Avdo's accomplishments was the reciting of the song of "Bećiragić Meho" in 1951. I have already described the circumstance under which he learned and first sang this song in 1935. He assured me that he had not sung it since that time, nor had he heard it in the intervening years. Sixteen years and five days exactly had passed. There is some confusion toward the beginning of the 1951 text; one can feel Avdo probing his memory. He was straining to prove himself; but most of all, I believe, he sang it for Milman Parry and Nikola Vujnović, in memory of a peaceful, sunny day so many years before. Before reciting the tale he recalled how Parry had asked him to sing the song; how he had asked to be excused, because he did not wish to take honor away from Mumin. Avdo knew that his song would be longer and more ornate. "The professor said, 'whatever is not a sin is not shameful,' so I found Mumin, and embraced him and took his hand: 'You will not be hurt, because my song will be much, much longer?' 'No, Avdo, I beg you as my son—he was older than I—I will not be hurt.' And the professor listened, like this professor, and Mumin sat there, and I sang." Then Avdo remembered and added: "Muminaga and the professor told me that he had learned that song from Ćor Husein; and Ćor Husein was an excellent singer in these parts." From the past the song was unwound and the tale emerged. Its essence, however, was from a time long before Avdo and Mumin and Ćor Huso; for more than half of this song takes place in the assembly with which it opens, as Bećiragić Meho tells of his wanderings and adventures, his trials and sufferings which have brought him to his present sorry state. To those who have ears to hear, Homer is singing of Odysseus in the court of Alcinous, recounting *his* wanderings and the misfortunes which had brought him to the shores of Phaeacia.

On 21 May 1939 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Nikola Vujnović completed his review of his transcription from the records of the words of Avdo's song "Sultan Selim Captures Kandija." He wrote this note at the bottom of the page: "Onda kad ne bude Avda među živima, neće se naći niko ko bi bio ovakav za pjevanje"—"When Avdo

is no longer among the living, there will be no one like him in singing." He has left behind him, however, songs which will be remembered in days to come.

NOTES

¹ See Milman Parry and Albert Lord, *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs* (Cambridge and Belgrade) Vol. I (1954), Vol. II (1953). These volumes contain songs and conversations in the Parry Collection from Novi Pazar. Avdo's material will be published beginning in the third and fourth volumes with the song of "The Wedding of Meho, Son of Smail."

² The information concerning Avdo's life comes from the following recorded conversations in the Parry Collection: Texts Nos. 12,436 and 12,443. These conversations are also a source for our knowledge of the singers from whom he learned his songs.

³ This poem is now available in English translation with introduction and commentary. See John Mavrogordato, *Diogenes Akrites* (Oxford, 1956). This excellent edition also prints the Greek text opposite the translation.

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